ANNALS OF RURAL BENGAL

BY

SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER, K.C.S.I.,

M.A., LL.D.

SEVENTH EDITION

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER, AND CO.

1897

THE ETHNICAL FRONTIER OF LOWER BENGAL WITH THE ANCIENT PRINCIPALITIES OF BEERBHOOM AND BISHENPORE.

Scholars will kindly bear in mind that the linguistic sections of this book were written from such lights as had reached a young worker in India in 1866.

DEDICATION.

BROOMHILL HOUSE,
4th March 1868.

MY DEAR SIR CECIL,

The forthcoming State Papers on the popularity and results of British rule in India, furnish a seasonable opportunity for a work which portrays the state of the country when it passed under our care. These pages, however, have little to say touching the governing race. My business is with the people. To no one could such a volume be more fitly dedicated than to a statesman who, by the development of municipal institutions, by popular education, and by an enlightened respect for native rights, has laboured during more than thirty years to call forth that new life and national vigour which are now working among the rural multitudes of Bengal.

I therefore inscribe it with your name.

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

W. W. HUNTER.

To

SIR CECIL BEADON, K.C.S.I.,

CIRENCESTER.

CHRONOLOGY.

1765. The Emperor appoints the Company to the Fiscal Administration of Bengal.

1765-72. The Company collects the revenues by native agents.

1772-86. The Company's experimental efforts at rural administration by means of English officers.

1786-90. Lord Cornwallis' Provisional System.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER II.

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY WHEN IT PASSED UNDER BRITISH RULE.

CHAPTER III.

THE ETHNICAL ELEMENTS OF THE LOWLAND POPULATION OF BENGAL.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ABORIGINAL HILL-MEN OF BEERBHOOM.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMPANY'S FIRST ATTEMPTS AT RURAL ADMINISTRATION—1765-1790.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMPANY AS A RURAL MANUFACTURER.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

APPENDIX.

To facilitate reference certain letters are appended to quotations from manuscripts indicating where the originals may be found. The following are the contractions used :—

I. O. R.	.	MS. Records (English), in the India Office, Whitehall.
C. O. R.	.	MS. Records (English and Persian), in the Calcutta Offices.
B. R. R.	.	MS. Revenue Records (English and Persian), in the Beerbhoom Offices.
B. J. R.	.	MS. Judicial Records (English, Persian, and Bengali), in the Beerbhoom Courts.
B. D. A.	.	MS. Domestic Archives (Persian and Bengali) of the Rajahs, and other families, in Beerbhoom.
Bn. R.	.	MS. Records (English and Persian), in the Burdwan Courts and Offices.
Bh. R.	.	MS. Records (English and Bengali), in the Bancorah Courts and Offices.
Be. D.A.	.	MS. Domestic Archives (Persian and Bengali) of the Rajah of Bishenpore.
I. O. L.	.	MSS. and rare Tracts in the India Office Library.
O. C. .	.	Ootaparah Collection, being a series of rare Tracts and Newspapers of the last century, belonging to Babu Jaikissen Mukarji of Ootaparah, in Bengal.

THE

ANNALS OF RURAL BENGAL.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

ON the frontier of Lower Bengal, fifty miles west from the field of Plassy, are to be traced the landmarks of two ancient kingdoms. They lie along the intermediate country between the lofty plateau of Central India and the valley of the Ganges. The primeval force which had upheaved the interior table-land here spent itself on fragmentary ridges and long wavy downs. On the west rise the mountains, covered to the summit with masses of vegetation. Gorgeous creepers first wreathe with flowers, then strangle their parent stems, and finally bind together the living and the dead in one impenetrable thicket. Here and there an isolated hill with a flat top stands out like a fortress on the plains. From ravines, arched over with foliage, turbid cataracts leap down upon the valley, there to unite into rivers which, at one season of the year, pour along in volumes of water,

half a mile broad and twenty feet deep, and at another season, dwindle to silver threads amid wide expanses of sand. Over the uplands the jungle still holds its primitive reign, affording covert to wild beasts and cool glades for herds of cattle. In general the plains undulate gently eastward, dotted with fruit-bearing groves, enamelled with bright green rice fields, and studded with prosperous villages. The soil, although less fertile than the swamps of Eastern Bengal, returns in low-lying grounds two crops each year; and the bracing atmosphere makes ample amends to the cultivator for the additional labour demanded by his fields. The forest yields a spontaneous wealth of timber, gums, and brilliant lac-dye; the valleys produce the finest indigo; cotton, jute, sugar-cane, oil-seeds, and cereals grow abundantly; from the mulberry shrubs are still derived the silks that adorned the beauties of the imperial seraglio; silver ore has been dug out of the mountains; copper is found on their slopes; small particles of gold have been washed from the river beds; and the country has long been famous for its iron and coal.

This well-watered land, rich in noble scenery,[1]

[1] 'A land of hill and dale, wood and water, abounding in scenery interesting to the geologist and lover of the picturesque. The climate also changes: the nights are cool and clear; the damp and fog of Calcutta are left behind.'—The Grand Trunk Road, its Localities, p. 18. Pamphlet, 8vo. Calcutta. The same traveller somewhat too enthusiastically calls the Beerbhoom highlands, 'the Switzerland of Bengal.' This and several other of the pamphlets by the Rev. James Long, subsequently quoted, appeared originally as articles in the *Calcutta Review*.

and enjoying during five months of the year an exquisite climate, formed the theatre of one of the primitive struggles of Indian history. It stood as the outpost of the Sanskrit race on the west of Lower Bengal, and had to bear the sharp collisions of Aryan civilisation with the ruder types prevailing among the aborigines. On its inhabitants devolved, during three thousand years, the duty of holding the passes between the highlands and the valley of the Ganges. To this day they are a manlier race than their kinsmen of the plains, and from the beginning of history one of the two kingdoms has borne the name of Mala-bhumi, the Country of the Wrestlers,—the other the appellation of Vir-bhumi, the Hero Land.

It is a matter of regret that an ethnical frontier which must have seen and suffered so much that would be interesting to mankind to know, should be without any record of the past. Every county, almost every parish, in England, has its annals; but in India, vast provinces, greater in extent than the British Islands, have no individual history whatever. Districts that have furnished the sites of famous battles, or lain upon the routes of imperial progresses, appear, indeed, for a moment in the general records of the country; but before the eye has become familiar with their uncouth names, the narrative passes on, and they are forgotten. Nor are the inhabitants themselves very much better acquainted with the history of the country in which they live. Each field, indeed, has its annals. The crops which

it has borne during the past century, the rent which it has paid, the occasions on which it has changed hands, the old standing disputes about its water-courses and landmarks, all these are treasured up with sufficient precision. But the bygone joys and sorrows of the district in general, its memorable vicissitudes, its remarkable men, the decline of old forms of industry and the rise of new,—in a word, all the weightier matters of rural history, are forgotten. Life wants the outdoor element which it possesses in so remarkable a degree in England. Men of the upper classes come less frequently into contact with each other; caste and religious differences dwarf the growth of good fellowship and limit the interchange of hospitalities; and anything like society in the European sense of the word is prevented by the seclusion of the female sex. The strong county feeling which knits together the magnates of an English shire has not had a chance of being developed among the landed gentry of India. Each house scrupulously preserves its own archives, but carefully conceals them from its neighbours. Indeed, it never strikes the listless, rich native, that what to him are dull contemporaneous events will in time possess the interest of history; nor are there any antiquarians to gather up such meagre records as vanity or selfishness may have framed. English history owes much of its value, and still more of its pathos, to the stores of private documents which the strong individuality of bygone Englishmen has left behind; but in India,

one rural generation dreams out its existence after another, and all are forgotten.

Not many family archives of importance have passed into my hands. The Rajahs placed at my disposal a portion of the manuscripts in their dilapidated palaces; the representatives of other distinguished houses followed their example; Pandits were employed to go about the country in order to gather materials for a history of each district from their own point of view; and several native gentlemen co-operated with me in collecting the folk lore. The result of these inquiries, however, was too meagre and too unreliable for publication. But four years ago, in taking over charge of the District Treasury, I was struck with the appearance of an ancient press, which, from the state of its padlocks, seemed not to have been opened for many years, and with whose contents none of the native officials was acquainted. On being broken open it was found to contain the early records of the district from within a year of the time that it passed directly under British rule. The volumes presented every appearance of age and decay; their yellow-stained margins were deeply eaten into by insects, their outer pages crumbled to pieces under the most tender handling, and of some the sole palpable remains were chips of paper mingled with the granular dust that white ants leave behind.

Careful research has convinced me that these neglected heaps contain much that is worthy of being preserved. For what trustworthy account

have we of the state of rural India at the commencement and during the early stages of our rule? Eloquent and elaborate narratives have indeed been written of the British ascendency in the East; but such narratives are records of the English Government, or biographies of the English Governors of India, not histories of the Indian people. The silent millions who bear our yoke have found no annalist.[1]

The only extensive investigations into the rural statistics of India are those conducted by the Survey Department, and no witness could give more telling evidence in proof of our ignorance than this, the single one we have to cite in our favour. The important parts of Bengal Proper, from a historical point of view, are unquestionably those that lie around the three cities which three successive races fixed upon as the headquarters of their rule. The Origin and History of the district that has Calcutta for its capital are disposed of in rather more than one page, a considerable portion of which is taken up by a feeble account of the Black Hole, and the often narrated hostilities that ensued. The Origin and History of Moorshedabad, the ancient focus of Moslem magnificence, are dismissed with half a page; and Maldah, the Hindu metropolis of Bengal, with its

[1] The author of 'The Grand Trunk Road, its Localities' (p. 16), states that Vir-bhumi 'is quite unexplored.' This was written scarcely ten years ago of a district lying within one hundred miles of Calcutta, and only a five hours' railway journey from it. The extent of our information as to remoter provinces may be inferred.

long line of kings, its gigantic walls and arches, its once stately palaces now the kennels of jackals, and the vast untenanted city which has been left standing as a spectacle of desolation and warning to those who now are to India what its builders once were, is treated as if it had been a sandbank which the river silted up last October, and will swallow down again next June. In a thin folio, not a single page has been devoted to its history.

This, too, with the richest and most authentic materials for rural history at our command. Valuable private stores of documents are indeed wanting; but for their absence the abundance of official records makes ample amends. In the chief Government office of every district in Bengal are presses filled with papers similar to those I have described. They consist of reports, letters, minutes, judicial proceedings, and relate, in the words of eye-witnesses and with official accuracy, the daily history of the country from the time the English took the administration into their own hands. Many of them are written in the curt forcible language which men use in moments of excitement or peril; and in spite of the blunders of copyists and the ravages of decay, they have about them that air of real life which proceeds not from literary ability, but from the fact that their authors' minds were full of the subjects on which they wrote. We learn from these worm-eaten manuscripts that what we have been accustomed to regard as Indian history is a chronicle of events which hardly affected, and which were for

the most part unknown to, the contemporary mass of the Indian people. On their discoloured pages the conspicuous vicissitudes and revolutions of the past century have left no trace. Dynasties struggled and fell, but the bulk of the people evinced neither sympathy nor surprise, nor did the pulse of village life in Bengal move a single beat faster for all the calamities and panic of the outside world. But these volumes, so silent on subjects about which we are already well informed, speak at length and with the utmost precision on matters regarding which the western world is profoundly ignorant. They depict in vivid colours the state of rural India when the sceptre departed from the Mussulman race. They disclose the complicated evils that rendered our accession, for some time, an aggravation rather than a mitigation of the sufferings of the people. They unfold one after another the misapprehensions and disastrous vacillations amid which our first solid progress was made. They impartially retain the evidence of low motives and official incompetence side by side with the impress of rare devotion and administrative skill. But taken as a whole, they reveal the secret of England's greatness in the East. They exhibit a small band of our countrymen going forth to govern an unexplored and a half-subdued territory. Before the grave heroism and masterful characters of these men the native mind succumbed. Our troops originated for us a rude Mahratta-like supremacy; but the rural records attest that the permanent sources of the English

ascendency in Bengal have been, not their brilliant military successes, but deliberate civil courage and indomitable will.

Besides the value of these memorials as a groundwork for an accurate and a yet unwritten history, they possess a special interest to those who are charged with the government of India at the present day. When the East India Company accepted the internal administration of Bengal, it engaged to rule in accordance with native usages; and the first step towards the fulfilment of its promise was to ascertain what these usages really were. To this end instructions repeatedly issued during a period of thirty years directing all local officers to institute inquiries, and even after the formal command was removed the habit of collecting and reporting information continued till 1820.

The period at which the rural records open in the western districts is one of peculiar interest. It stands on the border ground between the ancient and the modern system of Indian government. The evidence on which to form a permanent arrangement of the land revenue was in process of being collected, and not a single subject of fiscal legislation nor a detail in the agricultural economy of each district escaped inquiry. The tenure of the landholders and their relations to the middlemen; the tenure of the cultivators, their earnings and their style of living, their clothing and the occupation of their families at odd hours; the price of all sorts of country produce; the rent

of various qualities of land; the mineral products of the district; the condition of the artisans and manufacturers, their profits and their public burdens; the native currency and system of exchange; the native system of police; the state of the district jail; lastly, cesses, tolls, dues, and every other method of recognised or unrecognised taxation,—formed in turn the subject of report. In a word, the whole fabric of the rural life of Bengal, with its joys, sorrows, and manifold oppressions, is dissected and laid bare.

The sweeping revenue reforms inaugurated at the close of the first quarter of the present century, and the demands for a more exact administration that every year has brought forth since, have left neither leisure nor inclination for such studies. The labours of a previous school of officers soon became a subject of indifference to their successors; the quick decay of a tropical climate began its work; and of the researches that had occupied the ablest administrators during the first fifty years of our rule,—researches that they had designed as the basis of a consistent system of Indian rural law,—the greater part has, during the second fifty years, been made over as a prey to mildew and white ants.

What proportion has perished can never be known. What part survives can only be permanently preserved by the intervention of the State. Among a highly cultured people the writing of national history may well be left to private efforts; but in modern India no leisurely and lettered class

has yet been developed to conduct such researches.[3] In truth, government among imperfectly civilised societies has to discharge many functions which, in a more advanced stage, may, with great wisdom, be made over to individual enterprise. No one can be more sensitively conscious than the writer of the imperfections of a work written in the jungle, eight thousand miles distant from European libraries, amid the changes and daily exactions of an Indian career. But this isolation, while productive of sufficiently obvious defects, has enabled him to essay several things not attempted before. The manuscript Indian archives in London, in Calcutta, and in the provincial offices of Bengal have for the first time been compared, and their information brought to a common focus. Learned natives have been employed to compile district histories, and the Ancient Houses of Bengal have been induced, for the first time in the English annals of the Province, to open up their family record-rooms. The whole body of missionaries—Episcopal, Baptist, and American Dissenters—who labour among the lapsed races on the ethnical frontier, have heartily joined in the work, each favouring me with the results of his own researches into the

[3] Dr. Buchanan, who was engaged in a statistical and historical survey of the districts north of Beerbhoom (1807-1814), could not find a single antiquarian or a single historical document throughout the great province of Bahar.—The History, Antiquities, etc., of Eastern India, compiled from the Buchanan MSS., in the East India House, by R. Montgomery Martin, 3 vols. 8vo, 1838, vol. i., p. 21. This work would form an excellent basis for a history of rural Bengal, were it not confined to a few districts only.

languages and habits of the hill-men. If it were not invidious to particularize any single class of my coadjutors, it would be to these learned and reverend gentlemen that I should wish to return especial thanks.

Whatever may be the shortcomings of this preliminary volume, the author believes that it will lead to the discovery, and he hopes to the rescue, of a vast store of materials from which an invaluable work might be educed; materials which will enable the Indian Government to discharge two hitherto neglected duties; the duty which it owes to our own nation, of preserving the only circumstantial memorials of British rule in Bengal, and the duty it owes to other nations, of interpreting the rural millions of India to the western world.[4]

[4] It is due to the Bengal Government to state, that I was relieved during a short time from other duties, in order to be enabled to prosecute the researches of which this volume is the first-fruits. But hardly had the arrangement been made when the famine of 1865-66 came, and the services of every officer were required for practical work.

CHAPTER II.

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY WHEN IT PASSED UNDER BRITISH RULE.

ON the 29th of March 1787, the British Government undertook the direct administration of the two great frontier principalities of Lower Bengal. Situated on the extreme verge of unwieldy jurisdictions, and separated from headquarters by rivers and swamps, and almost impassable jungle, they had, up to this time, been permitted by the English to remain pretty much as we had found them, in the hands of their hereditary princes.[1] The position of these noblemen was in many respects analogous to that of wardens of the marches in feudal times. They held their territory partly as semi-independent chiefs, partly upon a military tenure from the Viceroy of Bengal, paying only a small tribute,

[1] Beerbhoom had been temporarily placed under supervision in 1769; it was formally 'visited' by the Committee of Circuit in 1772, but the local administration remained in the hands of the Rajah as Amil.—Consultations of the Revenue Council of Moorshedabad, dated 23d October 1770, 28th February 1771, etc.; the Rajah's petition, in Proceedings of the Select Committee, dated 28th April 1770, I. O. R.; Family Book of the Princes of Beerbhoom, B. D. A.

and being held responsible for the defence of the western frontier. But during the half-century preceding 1787 their power had rapidly declined. In the northern district Vir-bhumi, literally Hero Land, or as it is commonly written in English documents, Beerbhoom, an unsuccessful rebellion had subjected the people to double burdens, and a painful disease had prevented several successive princes from heading their troops in the field. In the southern district, anciently called Mala-bhumi, the Land of the Wrestlers, but now known as Bishenpore, matters were still worse.[1] Family feuds had wasted the inheritance, and the reigning prince, a white-haired, feeble man, had sunk beneath an accumulation of misfortunes. In neither district was the hereditary chief in a position to provide for the security of his people. Bodies of marauders congregated upon the frontier, where the mountain system slopes down upon the Gangetic valley, and in 1784 the evil had grown so serious as to require the interference of the British power.[2] In May 1785, the collector of Moorshedabad, at the extremity of whose jurisdiction Beerbhoom lay, formally declared the civil authorities 'destitute of any force capable of making head against such an armed multitude,' and petitioned for troops to act against bands of

[1] Bisheapore is at present divided between the districts of Bancorah and Midnapore. Bh. R.

[2] Letter from Edward Otto Ives, Esq., Magistrate of Moorshedabad, to the Governor-General and Gentlemen of the Council of Revenue, dated 15th August 1784. B. J. R.

plunderers four hundred strong.[4] A month later, the banditti had grown to 'near a thousand people,' and were preparing for an organized invasion of the lowlands.[5] Next year we find the freebooters firmly established in Beerbhoom; strong positions occupied by their permanent camps; the hereditary prince unable to sit for an hour on his state cushion, much less to appear in the field; the public revenue intercepted on its way to the treasury, and the commercial operations of the company within the district at a stand.[6] It was clear that the old system of things could not last much longer. A British civil officer was accordingly despatched from Moorshedabad to support the Rajah against the marauders, to inquire into the grievances of the peasantry, and to ascertain the amount of revenue which the principality, if relieved of the incidents of a military tenure and brought directly under British rule, could afford to pay.[7]

No records of this gentleman's administration have been discovered. It does not appear that he increased the public burdens, nor indeed was time allowed him to do so. Lord Cornwallis, when re-adjusting the divisions of Bengal in 1787,[8] saw that

[4] Letter from the same to the same, dated Moorshedabad, 26th May 1785. B. J. R.

[5] Letter from the same to the same, dated 30th June 1785. B. J. R.

[6] Many factories were abandoned altogether. B. R. R.

[7] Miscellaneous proceedings: Committee of Revenue, Fort-William. The deputation of Mr. G. R. Foley, the gentleman in question, received sanction on the 9th of February 1786. C. O. R.

[8] Board of Revenue's MS. Records. C. O. R.

this was not a case for half-measures or makeshifts, and that Beerbhoom would never be free from the hill plunderers so long as it remained a remote dependency of Moorshedabad. The southern district, Bishenpore, had before this reached a state that demanded the presence of a responsible representative of the Government, and Lord Cornwallis determined to unite the two border principalities into one compact British district. Accordingly, in the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 29th of March 1787, the following appointment was announced: 'W. Pye, Esq., confirmed Collector of Bishenpore in addition to Beerbhoom, heretofore superintended by G. R. Foley, Esq.'[9]

It does not appear that Mr. Pye ever visited Beerbhoom except in pursuit of banditti who had sacked some towns in Bishenpore, and he suddenly quitted the district for a distant part of Bengal three weeks after the above appointment appeared.[10] His successor was Mr. Sherburne, a gentleman whose history and misfortunes will hereafter occupy some

[9] The *Calcutta Gazette, or Oriental Advertiser*, folio and quarto, a weekly paper published on Thursdays, with Gazettes Extraordinary for special orders of Government and other news. The most perfect series of this journal is in the India Office Library: it extends from 1784 to 1805, with a break between 1802 and 1804. Two volumes of selections have been compiled from a less perfect copy in India by Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, of the Bengal Civil Service, one of Her Majesty's Judges in the Supreme Court of Bengal. I. O. L.

[10] Bishenpore had been placed under Mr. Pye on the 25th April 1786; he left the United District on the 19th April 1787. Having got scent of promotion he did not wait for the arrival of his successor, but made over charge to his assistant.—MS. Office Memo. Book, Board of Revenue. C. O. R.

pages.[11] During his brief administration of a year and a half the capital of the united district was transferred from Bishenpore, on the south of the Adji, to Soorie the present headquarters in Beerbhoom, on the north of the river; the larger bodies of marauders were broken up, and the two hereditary princes reduced to the rank of private country gentlemen. Mr. Sherburne ruled sternly, as a governor of a newly subjected frontier ought to rule, and his name remains in the mouths of old inhabitants to this day. In those times, however, the only result of placing an energetic man at the head of a district was to disperse the banditti into the adjoining jurisdictions, and in October 1788 the Calcutta newspaper announced that a Beerbhoom treasure party had been attacked on the south of the Adji, the military guard overpowered, five men slain, and more than three thousand pounds worth of silver carried off.[12]

Early in November 1788, Mr. Sherburne was removed under suspicion of corrupt dealings, and after a short interregnum Mr. Christopher Keating assumed charge of the united district.[13] Mr. Keating found the local administration in full working

[11] Appointed, 4th April 1787; received charge, 29th April 1787; delivered over charge, 3d November 1788. Board of Revenue Records. C. O. R.

[12] Sicca rupees 30,000. *Calcutta Gazette* of Thursday, 16th October 1788. The attack took place within the district of Burdwan, Thanna Manirampore.

[13] Appointed, 29th October 1788; received charge of the district, 14th November; gave over charge to his successor and left the district, 6th August 1793, after an administration of nearly five years. C. O. R.

order, under the experimental system which forms the distinguishing feature of the first four years of Lord Cornwallis' reign. During the eighteen months of Mr. Sherburne's rule, the two frontier principalities had passed from the condition of military fiefs into that of a regular British district, administered by a collector and covenanted assistants, defended by the Company's troops, studded with fortified factories, intersected by a new military road, and possessing daily communication with the seat of government in Calcutta. The local records are preserved without interruption from this date, and the short interval between 1786 when the district was entirely under its native chiefs, and 1788, the period with regard to which our information becomes exact, although it changed the position of the Rajahs and the form of the local administration, could not in any important degree have altered the condition of the people. The inhabitants of Beerbhoom and Bishenpore in November 1788 were, so far as regards their numbers, their habits, their burdens, and their social welfare, precisely in the circumstances in which Mr. Pye found them in March 1787. The benefits which they enjoyed and the evils which they suffered, they owed not to English but to native government, and their condition may be assumed to fairly represent the state of similar semi-independent principalities at the period of their passing under our rule. This state, viewed from the other side of the globe, mellowed by the lapse of time, and regarded with

that tenderness which spontaneously goes forth to ancient types that have passed away, has been depicted as happier and infinitely better suited to the natives of Bengal, than their subsequent condition under British governors. Whether such pictures are borne out by closer inspection, the rural records, written by eye-witnesses and without any view to history, will show.

In the cold weather of 1769 Bengal was visited by a famine whose ravages two generations failed to repair. English historians, treating of Indian history as a series of struggles about the Company's charter enlivened with startling military exploits, have naturally little to say regarding an occurrence which involved neither a battle nor a parliamentary debate. Mill, with all his accuracy and minuteness, can spare barely five lines[14] for the subject, and the recent Famine Commissioners confess themselves unable to fill in the details.[15] But the disaster which from this distance floats as a faint speck on the horizon of our rule, stands out in the contemporary records in appalling proportions. It forms, indeed, the key to the history of Bengal during the succeeding forty years. It places in a new light those broad tracks of desolation which the English conquerors found

[14] Vol. iii. p. 486. 8vo. 1860.

[15] 'We have not yet been able to obtain any details of the great famine in Bengal of 1770.'—Papers, etc., relating to the famine in Bengal and Orissa (1866), presented to Parliament by Her Majesty's command. Folio. Vol. i. p. 228. Further on, however (p. 345), some information is given.

everywhere throughout the Lower Valley; it unfolds the sufferings entailed on an ancient rural society, by being suddenly placed in a position in which its immemorial forms and usages could no longer apply; and then it explains how, out of the disorganized and fragmentary elements, a new order of things was evolved.[16]

Lower Bengal has three harvests each year: a scanty pulse crop in spring; a more important rice crop in autumn; and the great rice crop, the harvest of the year, in December. In the early part of 1769 high prices[17] had ruled, owing to the partial failure of the crops in 1768, but the scarcity had not been so severe as materially to affect the Government rental. In spite of the complaints and forebodings of local officers, the authorities at headquarters reported that the land-tax had been

[16] Besides the official papers subsequently quoted, the following pamphlets, some of them I believe uniques, have been used as materials for this chapter: 'A Narrative of what happened in Bengal in 1760;' no title-page. 'Memoirs of the Revolutions in Bengal,' 1760. 'Lord Clive's Letter to the Proprietors of the East India Stock,' 1764. 'Dangers, etc., from the East India Company's building their own Ships,' 1768. 'Original Papers relative to the Disturbances in Bengal from 1759 to 1764' (a most valuable collection), 1765. 'An Account of the Trade to the East Indies,' etc., with two other tracts, 1772. 'Essay on the Rights of the East India Company,' 1776. 'Letter from G. Dodwell, Esq., to the Proprietors,' 1777. Two tracts upon the Company's building their own shipping, 1778. 'Considerations on the East India Bill now depending in Parliament,' 1779. After 1780 the pamphlets and newspaper articles relative to Bengal become too multitudinous for enumeration. The number consulted exceeds 130. O. C. and I. O. L.

[17] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated Fort William, 30th September 1769. Proceedings of the Select Committee, 1st February 1769, etc. I. O. R.

rigorously enforced;[18] and the rains of 1769, although deficient in the northern districts, seemed for a time to promise relief.[19] In the Delta they had been so abundant as to cause temporary loss from inundation; and during the succeeding year of general famine, the whole south-east of Bengal uttered no complaint.[19a] The September harvest, indeed, was sufficient to enable the Bengal Council to promise grain to Madras on a large scale,[20] notwithstanding the high prices. But in that month the periodical rains prematurely ceased, and the crop which depended on them for existence withered. 'The fields of rice,' wrote the native superintendent of Bishenpore at a later period, 'are become like fields of dried straw.' Calamitous predictions, however, were at that time so common on the part of local officials, that the Governor declined to transmit the alarm. The only serious intimation of the approaching famine to the Court of Directors in 1769, is not signed by the President, Mr. Verelst, but by Mr. John Cartier, the second in Council, who was to succeed him.[21] The Government had deemed it necessary to lay in a supply for the

[18] 'The Revenues were never so closely collected before.'—Resident at the Durbar, 7th February 1769. I. O. R.

[19] Mr. Rumbold, chief of Bahar, at consultation of the 16th August 1769.

[19a] Mr. Becher, Resident at the Durbar, 30th March 1770, etc. I. O. R.

[20] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 25th September 1769. Public Consultation, August 7, 1769.

[21] From the same to the same, dated 23d November 1768, paras. 8, 9, 10. Mr. Verelst's omission to sign was probably intentional, as he took part in the proceedings and signed another letter of the same

troops,—a piece of foresight at that period common when a harvest was either very abundant or very scanty, and one which Mr. Cartier wholly failed to carry out in the present instance.

On the 24th of December, after the last harvest of the year had been gathered in, Mr. Verelst laid down his office, without having conveyed to his masters a single intimation of the true nature of the impending famine.[22]

On the same day Mr. Cartier took over charge of the province, but he seems to have intimated to his masters no further anxiety until late in January 1770. In the fourth week of that month he writes that one district was suffering so severely that some slight remission of the land-tax would have to be made;[23] but ten days afterwards he informs the Court, that although the distress was undoubtedly very great, the Council had not 'yet found any failure in the revenue or stated payments.'[24]

New hopes had also arisen, for the spring crop

date. The letters of the 25th and 30th September only express apprehensions for the revenue, not of general famine in Bengal.

[22] From the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 26th December 1769. Postscript. In Appendix B, 'The Great Famine of 1770 officially described,' extracts from the original documents will be found. The reader should discriminate between the apprehensions of local officers and the general facts as ascertained and accepted by Government.

[23] Letter from the same to the same, dated 25th January 1770, para. 48. The proposed remission was about £30,000, out of a total revenue which in 1787 amounted to £450,000 sterling. Letter from the Governor-General in Council to the Court of Directors, dated 31st July 1787. I. O. R.

[24] Letter from the same to the same, dated 4th February 1770, paras. 4, 5, and 6. I. O. R.

now covered the fields and promised a speedy although a scanty relief. It was ascertained, moreover, that both banks of the Ganges, in the north of the province, had yielded an abundant barley and wheat harvest.[25] The people suffered intensely, —how intensely, it seems to have been as difficult then as now for the Central Government to ascertain until too late: and notwithstanding alarming reports from the districts, up to the middle of February the Council believed the question to be chiefly one of revenue. The utmost that could be expected from Government, it wrote, would be a lenient policy towards the husbandmen whom a bad harvest had disabled from paying the usual land-tax.[26] It was common at that period to make temporary remissions and advances whenever a harvest proved deficient; but during 1769–70, although such indulgences were constantly proposed, they were not, except in a very few isolated instances, granted. Various charitable schemes were proposed, but no other relief measures at this period are specified in the letters home, and the local efforts, as will be afterwards seen, were on a sadly inadequate scale. In April a scanty spring harvest was gathered in; and the Council, acting upon the advice of its Mussulman Minister of Finance, added ten per cent. to the land-tax for the ensuing year.[27]

[25] Consultation of the 9th June 1770. I. O. R.

[26] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 4th February 1770, para. 6. I. O. R.

[27] Letter from the same to the same, dated 11th September 1770,

But the distress continued to increase at a rate that baffled official calculation.[28] The marvellous and infinitely pathetic silence under suffering which characterizes the Bengali at length was broken; and in the second week of May, the Central Government awoke to find itself in the midst of universal and irremediable starvation. 'The mortality, the beggary,' they then wrote, 'exceed all description. Above one-third of the inhabitants have perished in the once plentiful province of Purneah, and in other parts the misery is equal.'[29]

The inability of the Government to appreciate the true character of the calamity is rendered more remarkable by the circumstance, that at that period the local administration continued in the hands of the former native officers.[30] A Mussulman Minister of State[31] regulated the whole internal government; native revenue farmers covered the province, prying into every barn, and shrewdly calculating the crop on every field; native judges retained their seats in the rural courts; and native officers still discharged the whole functions of the police. These men knew the country, its capabilities, its average yield and its average requirements, with an accuracy that

para. 5. The financial year commenced on the 10th of April. The revenue was raised from £1,380,269 to £1,524,567 during the famine year. I. O. R.

28 The spring crops proved deficient. Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 9th May 1770. I. O. R.

29 Same letter, para. 3.

30 It was not till 1772 that the Company stood forth as the civil administrator of Bengal.

31 The celebrated Mahomed Reza Khan.

the most painstaking English official can seldom hope to attain to. They had a strong interest in representing things to be worse than they were; for the more intense the scarcity, the greater the merit in collecting the land-tax. Every consultation is filled with their apprehensions and highly-coloured accounts of the public distress; but it does not appear that the conviction entered the minds of the Council during the previous Winter months, that the question was not so much one of revenue as of depopulation. This misconception, strange as it may appear, is susceptible of explanation. From the first appearance of Lower Bengal in history, its inhabitants have been reticent, self-contained, distrustful of foreign observation, in a degree without parallel among other equally civilised nations. The cause of this taciturnity will afterwards be clearly explained; but no one who is acquainted either with the past experiences or the present condition of the people, can be ignorant of its results. Local officials may write alarming reports, but their apprehensions seem to be contradicted by the apparent quiet that prevails. Outward palpable proofs of suffering are often wholly wanting; and even when, as in 1770, such proofs abound, there is generally no lack of evidence on the other side. The Bengali bears existence with a composure that neither accident nor chance can ruffle. He becomes silently rich or uncomplainingly poor. The emotional part of his nature is in strict subjection; his resentment

enduring, but unspoken; his gratitude of the sort that silently descends from generation to generation. The passion for privacy reaches its climax in the domestic relations. An outer apartment, in even the humblest households, is set apart for strangers and the transaction of business, but everything behind it is a mystery. The most intimate friend does not venture to make those commonplace kindly inquiries about a neighbour's wife or daughter, which European courtesy demands from mere acquaintances. This family privacy is maintained at any price. During the famine of 1866 it was found impossible to render public charity available to the female members of the respectable classes, and many a rural household starved slowly to death without uttering a complaint or making a sign.

All through the stifling summer of 1770 the people went on dying. The husbandmen sold their cattle; they sold their implements of agriculture; they devoured their seed-grain; they sold their sons and daughters, till at length no buyer of children could be found;[32] they ate the leaves of trees[33] and the grass of the field; and in June 1770 the Resident at the Durbar affirmed that the living were feeding on the dead.[34] Day and night a torrent of famished and disease-stricken wretches

[32] Petition of Mahomed Ala Khan, Foujdar of Purneah.—Consultations, 28th April 1770, etc. I. O. R.

[33] Petition of Ujaggar Mull, Amil of Jessore.—Consultations of 28th April 1770. I. O. R.

[34] Letter of the 2d June. Consultation of 9th June 1770. I. O. R.

poured into the great cities. At an early period of the year pestilence had broken out. In March we find smallpox at Moorshedabad, where it glided through the Viceregal mutes, and cut off the Prince Syfut in his palace.[35] The streets were blocked up with promiscuous heaps of the dying and dead. Interment could not do its work quick enough; even the dogs and jackals, the public scavengers of the East, became unable to accomplish their revolting work, and the multitude of mangled and festering corpses at length threatened the existence of the citizens.

At the beginning of the famine, a young civilian landed in Calcutta who was destined to reach the highest post that a British subject can aspire to in the East. John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, was a man of singular honesty, and one who held in especial disdain the art of colouring or exaggerating. The scenes of 1770 left an impression on his mind that neither an eventful career nor an unusually prolonged period of active life could efface. When in high office he always displayed a peculiar sensitiveness with regard to the premonitory signs of scarcity, and elaborated a system by which he hoped to avert famine. His most historical act[36] was prompted by the effects of

[35] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 18th March 1770. I. O. R.

[36] His opposition to Lord Cornwallis with regard to making the settlement of 1789 permanent at once. Shore thought that a country only half-peopled and with one-third of its surface lying waste, was not ready for such a measure.

the depopulation occasioned by the calamity we are describing, and nearly forty years afterwards, when many of the later incidents of Eastern service had passed from his remembrance, his undying recollection of the horrors of 1770 found expression in verse. It is to be regretted that the only non-official description we possess by an eye-witness is a metrical one; but it should be remembered that John Shore's poetry adheres as closely to the facts as many men's prose:—

'Still fresh in memory's eye the scene I view,
The shrivelled limbs, sunk eyes, and lifeless hue;
Still hear the mother's shrieks and infant's moans,
Cries of despair and agonizing moans.
In wild confusion dead and dying lie;—
Hark to the jackal's yell and vulture's cry,
The dog's fell howl, as midst the glare of day
They riot unmolested on their prey!
Dire scenes of horror, which no pen can trace,
Nor rolling years from memory's page efface.'[37]

Christian humanity and enlightened government have rendered modern statesmen ignorant of the meaning of the words pestilence and famine in their ancient sense. The recent calamity in Bengal has indeed given us a hint as to what the latter term might come to mean; but even the local officers who saw it at the worst, will hardly be prepared for the effects of a famine under the old *régime*. Lest any one should be tempted to consider Shore's verses coloured, or my own pages strained, I copy a

[37] Memoir of the Life and Correspondence of John Lord Teignmouth, by his Son. Vol. i. pp. 25, 26. 8vo. London, 1843.

description, faithfully drawn from the Mussulman writers, of the calamity that befell Gour several centuries before.[38] As the famine of 1770 stands an appalling spectre on the threshold of British rule in India, so the year in which Bengal was incorporated into the Mogul Empire is marked by a disaster from which the Hindu metropolis never recovered. 'Thousands died daily,' writes the historian of Bengal. 'The living, wearied with burying the dead, threw their bodies into the river. This created a stench which only increased the disease. The governor was carried off by the plague. The city was at once depopulated, and from that day to this it has been abandoned. At the time of its destruction it had existed two thousand years. It was the most magnificent city in India, of immense extent, and filled with noble buildings. It was the capital of a hundred kings, the seat of wealth and luxury. In one year was it humbled to the dust, and now it is the abode only of tigers and monkeys.'[39]

In 1770 the rainy season brought relief, and before the end of September the province reaped an abundant harvest.[40] But the relief came too late to avert depopulation. Starving and shelterless crowds crawled despairingly from one deserted vil-

[38] The precise nature of this calamity is uncertain; probably pestilence proceeding from famine.

[39] History of Bengal, by J. C. Marshman. Third edition. Serampore.

[40] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 24th December 1770, para. 22. I. O. R.

lage to another, in a vain search for food, or a resting-place in which to hide themselves from the rain. The endemics incident to the season were thus spread over the whole country, and until the close of the year disease continued so prevalent as to form a subject of communication from the Government in Bengal to the Court of Directors.[41] Millions of famished wretches died in the struggle to live through the few intervening weeks that separated them from the harvest, their last gaze being probably fixed on the densely covered fields that would ripen only a little too late for them. 'It is scarcely possible,' write the Council at the beginning of the September reaping, 'that any description could be an exaggeration.'[42]

Three months later another bountiful harvest, the great rice crop of the year, was gathered in. Abundance returned to Bengal as suddenly as famine had swooped down upon it, and in reading some of the manuscript records of December, it is difficult to realize that the scenes of the preceding ten months have not been hideous phantasmagoria or a long troubled dream. On Christmas Eve the Council in Calcutta wrote home to the Court of Directors that the scarcity had entirely ceased and, incredible as it may seem, that unusual plenty had returned. 'There is already,' they added, 'a great quantity of grain in this place, and a prospect of

41 Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 12th December 1770, para. 9. I. O. R.

42 Letter from the same to the same, dated Fort William, 11th September 1770, para. 4. I. O. R.

much more abundance in a short time.'[43] So generous had been the harvest, that the Government proposed at once to lay in its military stores for the ensuing year, and expected to obtain them 'at a very cheap rate.'

The season of scarcity was indeed past.[44] In 1771 the harvests again proved plentiful;[45] in 1772 they were so superabundant, that the land revenue could not be realized in consequence of the excessively low price of grain;[46] and in 1773, notwithstanding a temporary apprehension for the crops in the northern districts,[47] the earth again yielded unwonted increase, and exportation went on briskly to less favoured provinces.[48]

The famine of 1770 was therefore a one year's famine, caused by the general failure of the December harvest in 1769, and intensified by a partial failure of the crops of the previous year and the following spring. In the preceding year, 1768–69, high prices had ruled; but there had been nothing like famine, nor even a deficiency in the crops sufficient to materially affect the rents.[49] On the other

[43] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 24th December 1770, para. 22. See also a letter from the same to the same, dated 12th December 1770, para. 9. I. O. R.

[44] Public Consultation of the 14th November 1770. I. O. R.

[45] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 10th January 1772, para. 16, etc.

[46] Letter from the same to the same, dated 10th November 1773, para. 33. Also Letter of the 30th December. I. O. R.

[47] Letter of the 10th November 1773, para. 32. I. O. R.

[48] Letter of the 30th December 1773, para. 9. I. O. R.

[49] I deduce this from the Revenue Statements of 1768–69. The local officers, as usual, are loud in their forebodings; but, on the whole,

hand, the one year of scarcity was followed by three years of extraordinary abundance, and nature exerted herself to the utmost to repair the damage she had done.

That she failed to do so, the records of the next thirty years mournfully attest. Plenty had indeed returned, but it had returned to a silent and deserted province. Before the end of May 1770, one-third of the population was officially calculated to have disappeared; in June the deaths were returned 'as six is to sixteen of the whole inhabitants;' and it was estimated that 'one half of the cultivators and payers of revenue will perish with hunger.' During the rains (July to October) the depopulation became so evident that the Government wrote to the Court of Directors in alarm about 'the number of industrious peasants and manufacturers destroyed by the famine.'[50] But it

the land-tax was 'closely' realized. Warren Hastings in 1772 quoted the receipts of the year 1768–69 as a sort of standard, and took credit for having brought up the revenue after three plentiful years, and by means, as he confesses, of cruel severity to the same amount. In 1770, Mahomed Reza Khan, the Financial Minister and Minister of the Interior, recommended an increase of the land-tax. The sum he proposed was £1,524,567. The actual receipts in 1768–69 were £1,525,485. Had there been any serious deficiency in the crops of 1768, the land-tax must have suffered (as it did in 1769–70), and the receipts of 1768 would not have been accepted as a standard. Again, had the country in 1769 been seriously impoverished by a scarcity in 1768, it could not have paid so large a portion of the land-tax for 1769–70 as it did. Out of a total demand amounting to £1,380,269, only £65,355 were remitted during the famine year.—Letters from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 11th September 1770, para. 5; of the 3d November 1772, para. 6; and other documents. I. O. R.

50 Mr. James Alexander, Supervisor of Bahar; Consultations of

was not till cultivation commenced, for the following year (1771), that the practical consequences began to be felt. It was then discovered that the remnant of the population would not suffice to till the land. Packet after packet came home, laden with the details of ruin. Indeed, whatever may be the subject of a communication to begin with, it seems irresistibly to slide into the great topic of the day; and in one of two letters bearing the same date, and both adverting to the depopulation, the Council plainly avow that there has been 'such a mortality and desertion among the ryots, as to deprive the (revenue) farmers of the possibility of receiving the rents' in arrear.[51] Notwithstanding the abundant crops of 1771, the country continued to fall out of tillage; and the commissioners appointed in 1772 to visit the various districts, found the finest part of the province 'desolated by famine,' 'the lands abandoned, and the revenue falling to decay.'[52] Two years after the dearth Warren Hastings wrote an elaborate report on the state of Bengal. He had made a progress through a large portion of the country, instituting the most searching inquiries by the way, and he delibe-

the 9th June 1770, and Mr. Ducarel of Purneah, 16th February 1770. I. O. R.

[51] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 12th February 1771, para. 44. In another letter, same date, they speak of 'the great reduction of people.' In one, a few months before, they lament 'the number of industrious peasants and manufacturers destroyed by the famine.' I. O. R.

[52] Letter from the same to the same, dated 5th September 1772, para. 10. I. O. R.

rately states the loss as 'at least one-third of the inhabitants.'[53] This estimate has been accepted by all official and by the most accurate non-official writers.[54] It represents an aggregate of individual suffering which no European nation has been called upon to contemplate within historic times. Twenty years after the famine the remaining population was estimated at from twenty-four to thirty millions; and we cannot help arriving at the conclusion, that the failure of a single crop, following a year of scarcity, had within nine months swept away ten millions of human beings.

The question as to who was responsible for their death, is the first idea that suggests itself to an Englishman of the present day: it would have been one of the last to strike either our countrymen or the natives of India at the period of which I write. Until 1772 Bengal was regarded by the British public in the light of a vast warehouse, in which a number of adventurous Englishmen carried on business with great profit and on an enormous scale.[55] That a numerous native population

[53] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 3d November 1772, para. 6. This admirable letter, which gives a vivid and accurate description of the whole country, and system of rural administration at the beginning of Warren Hastings' rule, is printed in full in the Appendix A, under the title of 'Bengal Portrayed, A.D. 1772.'

[54] For example, by Mill (vol. iii. p. 486, ed. 1840) and by Auber (Rise and Progress, vol. i. p. 414, ed. 1837).

[55] How tardy and uncertain were the steps by which the internal government of Bengal passed into English hands, will be shown in a subsequent chapter on 'The Company's First Attempts at Rural Administration.'

existed, they were aware; but this they considered an accidental circumstance, and one in which they took rather less interest than we at present feel in the aborigines of Natal or Sierra-Leone. The orator who was destined to clothe the unrealized millions of India in flesh and blood, and to set them breathing and suffering before the British nation, had taken his seat for Wendover barely four years before the calamity occurred, and was still known as a literary Irishman who had got into Parliament as private secretary to a noble lord. To the native mind, on the other hand, the question of responsibility probably would not occur in such cases even at this hour, except within the narrow circle influenced and instructed by the Anglo-Indian Press. The loss of life was accepted as a natural and logical consequence of the loss of the crop. The earth had yielded no food; and so the people, in the ordinary and legitimate course of things, died.

But an Englishman, reading that tragical story at the present day, cannot rest content with this. It is just to add that neither were the English Council in Calcutta satisfied to do so. At an early period they issued proclamations against hoarding or monopolizing grain, and took much trouble in seeing that their edict received due effect.[53] Of

[53] The precise date at which these measures were introduced does not transpire in the records. They are frequently referred to, however, *e.d.:* Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 9th March 1772, paras. 46 and 47; letter of the 5th

the real value of this measure I shall have afterwards to speak; but there is ample evidence to show that its projectors conscientiously devised it as a specific for the disease. They also laid an embargo on the exportation of grain, and thus endeavoured, according to their lights, to make the most of the scanty stock of food in the province. Mention is likewise made of public contributions and the importation of rice. But these operations were conducted on a painfully inadequate scale. Districts in which men were dying at the rate of twenty thousand a month received allotments of a hundred and fifty rupees. A provincial council gravely considers and magnanimously sanctions a grant of ten shillings worth of rice per diem for a starving population numbering four hundred thousand souls;[57] and the council, after being warned that 'one-half the cultivators and payers of revenue will perish with hunger,' fixed the contribution by the Company towards the sustenance of thirty millions of people during six months, at £4000.[58] Any expenditure above this sum must be defrayed, they stipulated, by the native grandees. The latter seem to have done their duty so

September 1772, para. 5. The Home authorities laid quite as much stress on these edicts as the Council in Bengal did, and ordered an official inquiry into alleged breaches of them in the several districts. I. O. R.

[57] Letter of the Supervisor of Rungpore, dated 26th September 1770. Consultation Prov. Council, Moorshedabad, 4th October. I. O. R.

[58] Letter from Mr. Becher, Resident at the Durbar, dated 24th December 1770. Petition of the Naib Diwan, 1st February 1771.

far as their means permitted.[59] To the Company's £4000 they added £4700, and made themselves liable for any extra expense that might be incurred. The total, however, proved wholly insufficient to touch the evil, and before the managers of the fund were aware, £15,000 had been expended in importation, besides £3100 of supplementary charity in Beerbhoom and the other frontier districts.[60] Much confusion and some recrimination resulted from this excess of expenditure, rendering it difficult to ascertain the amount contributed by the State. But, on the one hand, the native princes had made themselves responsible for the surplus; on the other, the Secret Committee, considering the large sums the natives had already given, recommended that they should not be called upon for more; and finally, we are assured that the total disbursed from the Company's treasury amounted to £6000.[61] Assuming that the £3000 in the western districts was in addition to this, the utmost that the Council, when pressed by the Court of Directors as to Government relief efforts, could show was a distribution of £9000 among thirty millions of people, of whom six in every sixteen were officially admitted to have perished.[62]

[59] Note by the Secret Committee, 1st February 1771. Report on Mahomed Reza Khan's trial, 1772.

[60] Petition of the Naib Diwan.

[61] Note by the Secret Committee, 1st February 1771. I. O. R.

[62] Add to this the native subscription of £4700, and we get a total of £13,700 from all sources. The sale of imported rice returned a profit of £6759, which must be deducted from the general outlay. —Memorandum on rice sales, 1st February 1771. The accounts are

This sum represents the total distributed in charity and allotted for importing grain. Indeed, when we turn to the latter operation, a scene of corruption and heartlessness is disclosed, which raises suspicions as to whether the pittance nominally granted by Government ever reached the sufferers. The whole administration was accused of dealing in grain for its private advantage. It was in vain that the Court of Directors wrote one indignant letter after another, demanding the names of the culprits. No satisfactory investigation was ever made; and the native agents of the governing body remain to this day under the charge of carrying off the husbandman's scanty stock at arbitrary prices, stopping and emptying boats that were importing rice from other provinces, and 'compelling the poor ryots to sell even the seed requisite for the next harvest.'[63] Not without reason does the Court express its suspicion that the guilty parties 'could be no other than persons of some rank' in its own service; and, curious to relate, the only high official who was brought to trial for the offence was the native Minister of Finance who had stood forth to expose the mal-practices of the English administration. It is fair to add that he was acquitted.[64]

very confused, and I have given the Council the benefit of any doubtful point.

[63] Letters from the Court of Directors to the President and Council in Bengal, dated 10th April 1771, 28th August 1771, etc. I. O. R.

[64] Mahomed Reza Khan. The investigation of the case against

The only other relief measures proposed were the movement of the troops from the afflicted parts, and the remission of the land-tax. The first was not carried out, on pretence of general orders from home, — orders which a powerful administration would have suspended during so exceptional a year. The heat of the weather was also enlarged upon and unfounded apprehensions were expressed of the political danger incident to such a change. The troops were marched, however, from one famine-stricken part to another, the movement being represented to the king as made for his benefit; and so far from the English administration having laid in a sufficient stock of grain for the army at the commencement of the famine, the peasantry complained that the military wrung from them their last chance of subsistence.[65]

Remissions of the land-tax and advances to the husbandmen, although constantly urged by the local officials, received little practical effect. In a year when thirty-five per cent. of the whole population and fifty per cent. of the cultivators perished, not five per cent. of the land-tax was remitted, and ten per cent. was added to it for the ensuing year (1770-71).[66]

the Rajah Schitab Roy was a public *amende* for his apprehension rather than a trial.

[65] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 9th May 1770, para. 3. Correspondence of Mr. Alexander, Supervisor of Patna, General Sir Robert Barker, Colonel Galliez, Captain Harper; and Consultations, May and June 1770. The failure of certain efforts to import grain for the troops also appears. I. O. R.

[66] For the severities practised, see Appendix A, 'Bengal Portrayed

To those who are acquainted with the efforts of the Bengal Government during the recent Orissa famine, this catalogue of relief measures in 1770 will appear inhumanely inadequate. But they should be careful not to over-estimate either the good effects of such measures, or the evil effects of their absence. In a country so devoid of the means of intercommunication and transport as Bengal then was, and as Orissa still is, no human efforts can avail much after a famine has once set in. According to the Bengali proverb, it is watering the top of a tree whose roots are cut.[67] All such attempts have proved, and will continue to prove, insufficient; and their inadequacy will appear more or less appalling, in proportion as the public gaze is more or less steadily fixed upon them. Thrice during the last hundred years has a famine, in the strong Indian sense of the word, visited the Northern Presidency. In 1770 the English Government knew very little about the country, and did still less for its inhabitants. Yet, in spite of efforts to exaggerate[68] what was in sober truth more than sufficiently sad, the Council at Calcutta escaped, so far as regards the scale of their charities, without

in 1772;' letters from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 11th September 1770, 3d November 1772, etc. Different letters represent different remissions. Before September 1770 the balance was only £80,332; it was afterwards reduced to £65,355 out of a total demand of £1,380,269.

[67] '*Gora katiya agaya jal dhala.*'

[68] Warren Hastings complained of such efforts as early as November 1772. Letter to the Court of Directors.

the faintest censure.[69] In 1837–38 the State efforts were more extended, but they were under the observation of an Anglo-Indian press, and the Government received no lenient handling.[70] At that time British public opinion in Bengal merely meant the sentiments of the Anglo-Indian community and its organs; but since the country passed directly under the Crown, the public opinion of England has been brought to bear directly on its great dependency, and English praise or blame in Bengal is no longer the praise or blame of a small section of our countrymen resident in India, but of the English nation. In 1866, therefore, the inadequacy of the Government efforts, although carried out upon a scale and with a zeal never previously displayed, was patent not merely to the Anglo-Indian press, but to the whole English people.

The benefits of this scrutiny, although occasionally unpalatable and on rare occasions unjust to Indian administrators, have nowhere been more conspicuous than in the history of the recent famine. The analogy it presents to the calamity of 1770 is in many points striking. In both cases, the immediate cause of the dearth was the premature cessation of the autumnal rains, resulting in the general failure of the December harvest and the

69 The Court seemed well satisfied with the relief measures of the Council, but reproached it with conniving at the monopoly and private trade in grain.

70 In the Calcutta and Agra newspapers of that day. One of the most valuable memorials of the famine is the Diary of an Invalid on his Journey down the Ganges, by J. O'B. Saunders, Esq., a well-known Indian journalist.

partial failure of the spring crops. In both cases, the Government failed to perfectly appreciate, or to deal with the true character of the calamity until the suffering amounted to actual starvation. In both cases, the general grain-stock in the province seems to have been below the average at the commencement; and in both, an abundant September harvest came to the relief of the people and the ensuing December crop brought the famine to a close. Even as regards the maximum price reached the analogy holds good, in each case rice having risen in general to nearly twopence, and in particular places to fourpence, a pound; and in each the quoted rates being for a brief period in several isolated localities merely nominal, no food existing in the market, and money altogether losing its interchangeable value.[71] In both, the people endured silently to the end, with a fortitude that casual observers of a different temperament and widely dissimilar race may easily mistake for apathy, but which those who lived among the sufferers are unable to distinguish from qualities that generally pass under a more honourable name.[72]

[71] Papers, etc., relative to the famine (1866) presented to Parliament by Her Majesty's command: Part i. p. 345. Letter of Mr. Becher, Resident at the Durbar, dated 18th June 1770. Representation of the Naib Diwan, 1st February 1771. The Cook's Chronicle of Beerbhoom (Appendix C).

[72] During 1866, when the famine was severest, I superintended public instruction throughout the south-west division of Lower Bengal, including Orissa. The subordinate native officers, about eight hundred in number, behaved with a steadiness, and, when called upon, with a self-abnegation beyond praise. Many of them ruined their health. One died while on circuit, almost in his

But here the analogy ends. In 1770, the Government, by interdicting what it was pleased to term the monopoly of grain, prevented prices from rising at once to their natural rates. The province had a certain amount of food in it and this food had to last nine months. Private enterprise if left to itself would have stored up the general supply at the harvest, with a view to realizing a larger profit at a later period in the scarcity. Prices would in consequence have immediately risen, compelling the population to reduce their consumption from the very beginning of the dearth. The general stock would thus have been husbanded and the pressure equally spread over the whole nine months, instead of being concentrated upon the last six. The price of grain, in place of promptly rising to three-halfpence a pound as in 1865-66, continued at three-farthings during the earlier months of the famine.[73] During the latter ones it advanced to twopence and in certain localities reached fourpence. In 1866 the Government perceived this. So far from arbitrarily interfering with, and thus discouraging, private trade, it clearly realized that its only chance was to stimulate private trade. In 1770, respectable men shrank from having anything to do with grain-dealing: it was impossible to traffic without a stock; it was impossible to collect a stock without

palanquin. The touching scenes of self-sacrifice and humble heroism which I witnessed among the poor villagers on my tours of inspection will remain in my memory till my latest day.

[73] Representation of the Naib Diwan.—Consultations, 1st February 1771, Appendix B.

becoming amenable to the law. In 1866, respectable men in vast numbers went into the trade; for Government, by publishing weekly returns of the rates in every district, rendered the traffic both easy and safe. Every one knew where to buy grain cheapest, and where to sell it dearest, and food was accordingly brought from the districts that could best spare it, and carried to those which most urgently needed it. Not only were prices equalized so far as possible throughout the stricken parts, but the publicity given to the high rates in Lower Bengal induced large shipments from the upper provinces, and the chief seat of the trade became unable to afford accommodation for landing the vast stores of grain brought down the river. Rice poured into the affected districts from all parts,—railways, canals, and roads vigorously doing their duty.

It is impossible to say whether the Government, without the assistance and counsel of the English press in India, would have struck out this course; but it is certain that from the very commencement the press urged this course upon the Government. It is equally certain, that in all the districts of Lower Bengal in which a non-official class of Englishmen resided and upon which English public opinion had in consequence been brought to bear, those measures obtained a high degree of success. Wherever the English planter or merchant goes, roads, railways, or canals are sure to follow him; and wherever these facilities for transport existed, the distribution of

the general grain-stock took place to an extent that prevented scarcity from passing into famine.[74] But, unhappily, there was a corner of Bengal in which the non-official Englishman seldom penetrates. The south-western districts, comprised under the general name of Orissa, possessed no English mercantile public, and had never expressed any desire for the means of intercommunication which is the first demand that such a public makes. They do not belong to the rest of the province either geographically or historically, and no attempt had been made to unite them with it.[75] As far back as the records extend, Orissa has produced more grain than it can use.[76] It is an exporting, not an importing province, sending away its surplus grain by sea, and neither requiring nor seeking any communication with Lower Bengal by land. During the earlier months of the scarcity it was known to have suffered like the rest of the province; but neither the public nor the Government were aware that a greater proportion of the crops had been lost in Orissa than in the other districts:[77] and the native merchants, relying on the general superabundance of grain,

[74] That there is a practical distinction between scarcity and famine, and a well-recognised point at which the former passes into the latter, the highest authorities acknowledge.—Papers, etc., relating to the famine in Bengal, presented to Parliament. Vol. i. p. 364. Folio.

[75] Famine Commissioners' Report (1866), Part i. secs. 32, 46, 412, etc.

[76] Famine Commissioners' Report (1866), Part i. sec. 47, etc.

[77] Indeed, it was impossible to estimate the return, as the Commissioners truly observe, till the grain was threshed out in January; the amount of straw being, under the circumstances, a fallacious index. —Report, Part i. sec. 112.

while curtailing their export transactions saw no necessity for importing.[78] Towards the middle of February, however, it began to be perceived that there was something special in the condition of Orissa. The truth was, that the abundant importation and distribution which had tended to make good the failure of the harvest in the rest of the province had never reached Orissa. No one had suspected that it would pay to carry grain by a long sea route to districts that have always a large quantity to export, and which, long after the rest of the province had begun its preparations for a year of famine, allowed a million and a half pounds of the precious commodity to leave its shores. In March, when at length it became generally understood that Orissa was destitute of rice, exportation and importation were alike impossible. The south-west monsoon had set in. The harbours of Orissa, never open more than a part of the year, had become impracticable. The only landward route was wholly unfit for the transport of sufficient food for the country, and the doomed population found themselves utterly isolated, 'in the condition of passengers in a ship without provisions.'[79]

78 The general idea, both among the best informed officials and non-officials, was, that large private stores existed in the hands of speculators. 'The populace held it very decidedly;' and the Commissioner thought there was 'enough to supply the market for a couple of years.' In the total absence of a system of rural statistics, there was no evidence to controvert these views.—Report, Part I, secs. 192, 193, 195, 196, etc.

79 Famine Report: 'On all the coast of Orissa, False Point excepted' (and its own peculiar difficulties the Commissioners else-

This condition was precisely that in which the whole province of Lower Bengal found itself in 1770. The want of means of intercommunication and transport rendered distribution impossible, even if Government had not deterred private merchants from undertaking the task. Importation on an adequate scale was impossible for the same reason. A single fact speaks volumes as to the isolation of each district. An abundant harvest, we are repeatedly told, was as disastrous to the revenues as a bad one; for when a large quantity of grain had to be carried to market the cost of carriage swallowed up the price obtained.[80] Indeed, even if the means of intercommunication and transport had rendered importation practicable, the province had at that time no money to give in exchange for food. Not only had its various divisions a separate currency which would pass nowhere else except at a ruinous exchange,[81] but in that unfortunate year Bengal seems to have been utterly drained of its

where explain), 'vessels of the ordinary size could only lie outside, exposed to the full force of the sea, and unload very slowly and with extreme difficulty during breaks of the boisterous monsoon weather.' —Sec. 290, Part i. Several vessels were wrecked or lost their cargo in the attempt.

[80] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 10th November 1773, para. 33. Autobiography of the Honourable Robert Lindsay, Collector of Sylhet, 1778–88, in the 'Lives of the Lindsays,' by Lord Lindsay, vol. iii. p. 207. 8vo. London, 1849.

[81] For example, the Narainy rupee of Bahar, the cowrie currency of Sylhet (of which little shells more than 2500 went to a shilling), etc.—Bengal letter, dated 10th November 1773, para. 4. I. O. R. Proceedings in the Public Department, Fort William, October 24, 1794. C. O. R. Lives of the Lindsays, vol. iii. p. 170, etc.

specie. Complaints of the deficiency of the currency are so common in the Manuscript Records as to blunt the reader's perception to the public distress implied. In 1769-70 things appear to have reached their worst point. In September 1769, the total balance in the treasury amounted to only £3482, and the whole reserve in the Company's treasure chests to £4679.[82] Its commercial agents could not procure sufficient silver to make the customary advances for the investment, while private persons, finding it impossible to recover even good debts on account of the debtor's inability to obtain coin to pay them in, refused to have any commercial dealings, and trade came to a stand.[83] This was the state of affairs at the beginning of the famine; towards the end they were if possible worse. In August 1770, the Council, while quite willing to let Madras have the usual supply for its investment, are forced to confess that they have no specie by means of which to remit it.[84]

The absence of the means of importation was the more to be deplored, as the neighbouring districts could easily have supplied grain. In the south-east a fair harvest had been reaped, except in circumscribed spots; and we are assured that, during the famine, this part of Bengal was enabled to export without having to complain of any deficiency in

[82] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 25th September 1769, para. 125. I. O. R.

[83] Ibid. para. 39. I. O. R.

[84] Letter from the same to the same, dated 25th August 1770, para. 26. I. O. R.

consequence.[84a] The north-western districts at first seemed equally fortunate, and the Central Committee, in reply to the lamentations of the Supervisor of Bahar, bitterly remark: 'Your neighbours, enjoying the blessing of almost a plentiful season, whilst you are suffering the evils of dearth and famine, exhibits but an unpleasant contrast and rather wounds the credit of English policy.'[85] Indeed, no matter how local a famine might be in the last century, the effects were equally disastrous. Sylhet, a district in the north-east of Bengal, had reaped unusually plentiful harvests in 1780 and 1781, but the next crop was destroyed by a local inundation, and notwithstanding the facilities for importation afforded by water-carriage one-third of the people died. The same thing took place in 1784 when two-thirds of the cattle perished.[86]

In 1866 the existence of an extensive trade with Europe enabled Bengal, with the exception of Orissa, to purchase as much food from other provinces as it required. Importation of grain was a profitable investment for capital, and capital flowed abundantly into that channel. The whole harvests of Northern India were laid under contribution to make good the deficiency of a single province, thus reducing the inevitable suffering to a minimum, and

84a Consultations, 28th April 1770, etc.

85 Consultations, 3d May 1770. Importation from the north was subsequently prohibited, and high prices ruled there also.

86 Report of the Honourable Robert Lindsay, Collector of Sylhet, dated 3d September 1784; Famine Report, 1866. Lives of the Lindsays, by Lord Lindsay, vol. iii. 208 (1849).

preventing the loss of life, deplorably great as it undoubtedly was in isolated places, from anywhere amounting to depopulation.

Before quitting the subject of dearths I wish to explain the two circumstances which regulate their intensity, and the method by which they may be counteracted. Famine in India is caused by natural scarcity, resulting from the deficiency of the crops, and more or less severe in proportion as the crops have been more or less completely destroyed. Inundations may cause temporary scarcity, but the losses of low-lying localities are usually made up by the subsequent abundance on the high grounds. On the other hand, drought, when sufficiently intense to destroy the December harvest, results in famine. The practical effects of famine depend, however, on its actual pressure as indicated by the rise in prices. Under native government and in 1770 under the Company's first attempt at administration, the actual pressure of a famine held a direct ratio to the natural scarcity. If the crops perished the people died: the actual pressure was in proportion to the natural scarcity, and the natural scarcity to the actual pressure. But the whole tendency of modern civilisation is to raise up intervening influences which render the relation of actual pressure to natural scarcity less certain and less direct, until the two terms which were once convertible come to have very little connection with each other. This is what has taken place in India during the last fifty years, as the two following examples show.

The north-western provinces of Bengal have twice been visited during that period by a season of terrible drought. On both occasions the proportion of the crops destroyed appears to have been the same, and the official estimate reports the natural scarcity as nearly equal.[87] The first took place in 1837, the second in 1860–61. In 1837, India was on the point of being thrown unreservedly open to European enterprise, but the change had not taken place. Railways were not; roads and watercourses were scarcely more numerous than in the time of Aurungzebe; non-official English influence, and the facilities for transport that such influence everywhere procures, were confined to the immediate vicinity of the great towns; nor had that vast store of surplus capital, ever keenly on the look-out for investment, been developed, which forms so striking a feature in the mercantile economy of Bengal at the present day. In short, the break-waters which modern civilisation raises up between natural scarcity and its actual pressure had not yet been constructed and the ancient monotonous story of starvation was repeated. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Government, then presided over by a nobleman of remarkable private humanity, the deaths rose to twelve hundred *per diem* in two of the principal towns;[88] in the open country the

[87] Colonel Baird Smith's Report.—Papers presented to Parliament (1867) relative to the Bengal famine. Folio. Vol. i. p. 230.

[88] This statement is based upon the correspondence of a member of the principal Relief Committee. The statistics are more fully given in my 'Rural Sketches,' published in Calcutta.

people perished by villages, and nine months of famine left the whole rural system disorganized. But during the next quarter of a century India advanced towards civilisation by forced marches, and the drought of 1860 found its effects checked by a hundred counteracting influences unknown in 1837. The natural scarcity was the same, but abundance of capital existed to buy food from other provinces, and the newly constructed railways with their network of roads cheaply and rapidly effected its distribution. The Grand Trunk Road, a work of Roman solidity, is officially reported to have been worn out in fifteen days;[89] 'every cart, bullock, camel, donkey, in short, every means of conveyance available in the country' was pressed into the service, and the principal railway stations were at length blocked up with grain.[90] While private enterprise thus intervened between the natural scarcity and the actual pressure, private charity provided for that section of the people whose earnings just suffice to keep them alive in seasons of ordinary fertility; a section which will always be thrown upon the public benevolence during a scarcity, as long as the present relations of labour and capital continue in Bengal.

The second example is derived from the two famines that have visited the lower provinces in 1770 and 1866. In this instance very little evidence exists for comparing the natural scarcity.

[89] Famine Commissioners' Report (1866), Part i. para. 73.
[90] Idem.

But we know that in 1866 one corner of Bengal—Orissa—was, so far as the intervening influences which prevent natural scarcity passing into actual pressure, exactly in the position of the whole province in 1770. In these similarly situated parts the actual pressure, as indicated by the price of rice, was precisely the same in both famines, the maximum being fourpence and the average over twopence a pound. It should be remembered, however, that silver was dearer then than now. The proportion of the crops lost seems also to have been equal. In the districts of Orissa which suffered most in 1866 and in Rajmahal, one of the districts which suffered most in 1770, the preceding harvests were officially estimated to have yielded less than one-half their average produce,[91] and any superiority of the early Orissa harvests in 1865 to those of Rajmahal in 1769 was more than counterbalanced by subsequent exportations from the Orissa seaboard. It may be inferred, therefore, that the natural scarcity was the same. The actual pressure happily proved very different. In 1770 the natural scarcity passed in a direct and unmitigated form into actual pressure. Before the middle of the year ten millions of the general population had perished; at the end of it, an official reports that of a certain poor class—the lime-workers—only five out of one hundred and fifty were living,[92] and one-third of

[91] Famine Commissioners' Report (1866), Part i. para. 74. Report of Mr. Harwood, Supervisor of Rajmahal, Consultations, 28th April 1770, etc.

[92] Consultations, 11th February 1771.

the country had returned to jungle. In 1866, roads, railways, canals, toiled day and night in bringing grain from other provinces, till at length the port[93] at which the railway taps the river system of Lower Bengal became unable to afford accommodation for landing the unprecedented cargoes, and the Railway Company had to seek the assistance of the authorities to prevent native shipmasters from unlading on its lines and sidings. One corner of Lower Bengal, however, continued in the same isolated state in 1866 in which the whole province found itself in 1770, and it was reserved for the unhappy people of Orissa to experience what happens when the actual pressure of a dearth is equal to the natural scarcity, and to illustrate to modern times the meaning of the ancient word famine.

The preventives of famine belong to two distinct classes; those that tend to avert natural scarcity, and those that are directed towards the development of intervening influences between natural scarcity and actual pressure. Natural scarcity may be averted either by Government undertaking works of irrigation and drainage at its own expense, or by giving the landed classes a permanent title to the soil,—thus inducing them to enter on such works by securing to them the profits. Orissa in 1866 was in this respect in the position of the whole of the province in 1770: it had neither a permanent settlement[94] nor any adequate irrigation

93 Kooshtea. This incident took place in my own court.

94 Just before the famine commenced, the native landholders of



works maintained by the State, and it was the only part of Lower Bengal in which the scenes of 1770 were re-enacted.[95]

The second set of preventives, those that tend to raise up breakwaters between natural scarcity and actual pressure, is a very large one. Every measure that helps towards the extension of commerce and the growth of capital, every measure that increases the facilities of transport and distribution, comes under this class. Whatever tends to develop the natural resources of a country, to call forth a spirit of enterprise among its inhabitants, to render each part less dependent on itself, and to bind up the commonwealth by the ties of mutual assistance and common interest, tends to mitigate the actual pressure of a famine. The whole list may be expressed by four words—enlightened government and modern civilisation. These are the specifics for famine. Where they exist, scarcity will never result in depopulation; where they do not, the utmost endeavours of Government may mitigate but they cannot avert. Nevertheless, the two formal specifics may be assisted by subsidiary relief efforts, such as public works and organized public charity.

Where natural scarcity passes directly into actual pressure, two exceptional measures have

Bengal had represented the discouragement to cultivation which the postponement of a permanent settlement caused in Orissa.

[95] Except that in 1866 there was no cannibalism, and the total loss of population in all Bengal was three-quarters of a million instead of ten millions.

been employed, with various degrees of success, to take the extreme edge off famine. The one is an embargo on exportation, the other is importation at the State expense. Both are dangerous expedients, and their success (when successful) implies that the ordinary laws of political economy cannot be applied to the case; in other words, that modern civilisation and enlightened government have yet to begin their work. This was the condition of Lower Bengal in 1770 and of Orissa, its south-western corner, in 1866.[96]

Before the commencement of 1771, one-third of a generation of peasants had been swept from the face of the earth and a whole generation of once rich families had been reduced to indigence. Every district reiterated the same tale. The revenue farmers—a wealthy class who then stood forth as the visible government to the common people—being unable to realize the land-tax, were stripped of their office, their persons imprisoned, and their lands, the sole dependence of their families, re-let.[97] The ancient houses of Bengal, who had enjoyed a semi-independence under the Moghuls and whom the British Government subsequently acknowledged as the lords of the soil, fared still worse. From the year 1770 the ruin of

[96] The Famine Commissioners, while admitting that cases may occur in which Government may wisely undertake importation, deny that it should ever interfere with exportation. I suspect Mr. Mill's arguments apply to both cases.

[97] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated Fort-William, 10th November 1773. I. O. R.

two-thirds of the old aristocracy of Lower Bengal dates. The Maharajah of Burdwan, whose province had been the first to cry out and the last to which plenty returned, died miserably towards the end of the famine, leaving a treasury so empty that the heir had to melt down the family plate, and when this was exhausted to beg a loan from the Government, in order to perform his father's obsequies.[98] Sixteen years later, we find the unfortunate young prince unable to satisfy the Government demands, a prisoner in his own palace.[99] This was the representative of a line which had possessed houses and lands along all the principal routes, so that however far its chief might travel, he never slept out of his own jurisdiction. The present Maharajah enjoys a revenue reputed to exceed a hundred thousand sterling, and administers his estates by means of a body of advisers that closely imitates the Imperial Council in Calcutta. The Rajah of Nuddea, another powerful nobleman of the last century,[100] emerged from the famine impoverished and in disgrace, very thankful, it would seem, to have the management of his estates taken out of his own hands and vested in his son.[101] The pro-

[98] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 25th August 1770, para. 52. I. O. R.

[99] From the Collector of Burdwan to the Board of Revenue, dated 16th May 1786. Bn. R.

[100] An account of this family is preserved in the Kshitisha Bansavali Charitam. Ed. Berlin, 1852.

[101] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated Fort-William, 10th November 1773, paras. 8, 11, etc.

prietrix of Rajshie,[102] a lady of remarkable talent for public business, retained the control of her district; but soon afterwards, being unable to pay the revenue, was threatened with dispossession, the sale of her lands, and the withdrawal of her Government allowance.[103] It would be easy to multiply examples. We shall afterwards view the ruin of the western districts more in detail. Meanwhile it is enough to say that when the local records open, they disclose the Rajah of Beerbhoom hardly permitted to pass the first year of his majority before being confined for arrears of revenue, and the venerable Rajah of Bishenpore, after weary years of duress, let out of prison only to die.

In a country whose inhabitants live entirely by agriculture, depopulation is always followed by a proportionate area of the land falling out of tillage. Bengal had lost one-third of its people and one-third of its surface speedily became waste. Three years after the famine, so much land lay uncultivated that the Council began to devise measures for tempting the subjects of native princes to migrate into its dominions.[104] While the province in general was rack-rented to supply the pressing necessities of the Company in England, Warren Hastings interposed on behalf of the frontier, in order that there might be such a show of lenity as

[102] The Rani Banwari.

[103] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 15th March 1774, para. 6.

[104] From the same to the same, dated 10th November 1773, para. 16.

to 'procure a supply of inhabitants from the neighbouring districts of the Nabob Vizier.' In 1776 the scarcity of cultivators had completely transposed the relations of landlord and tenant in Bengal. Formerly there had been more husbandmen wanting land than could obtain holdings; the only means of earning a livelihood was agriculture; emigration was unknown; the whole peasantry fell into the power of the landlords or revenue-farmers, and a cry of rural oppression arose such as has never been heard before or after. To this state of things, the result of a series of unusually plentiful crops at the beginning of the century,[105] the famine of 1770 put an end, and even a new-comer could see that there was more land awaiting cultivation than there were husbandmen to till it. 'In the present state of the country,' wrote Mr. Francis in 1776, 'the ryot has the advantage over the zemindar. Where so much land lies waste, and so few hands are left for cultivation, the peasant must be courted to undertake it.'[106] By degrees the agricultural population divided itself into two classes: the so-called resident cultivators[107] who, from attachment to their ancient homes, or, as was much more frequently the case, by reason of indebtedness to their landlord, continued on

[105] One year rice sold at more than a hundred pounds for a shilling; and tradition relates that a governor of Dacca shut up a gate until the price should again fall to the lowest rate reached during his reign, viz. one hundred and fifty pounds for a shilling.

[106] Minute by Mr. Francis.—Revenue Consultations of the 5th November 1776. I. O. R.

[107] Khud-kasht.

the same estate as before the famine; and a more adventurous class, termed non-resident or vagrant cultivators,[108] who threw up their previous holdings and went in search of new ones at the lower rates to which depopulation had reduced the market value of land. Within six years after the famine this classification had distinctly taken place, and the non-resident ryots who had previously formed an insignificant and degraded order continued during thirty years the most prominent feature in the rural system of Bengal. In old times, the non-resident cultivators wandered weariedly through the province because they could nowhere find land; after 1770, cultivators joined the non-resident class because they could find land everywhere cheaper than the old rates, and a collector, when wishing to imply that an English gentleman had received his land on advantageous terms, briefly describes him as a *paikasht ryot* (non-resident cultivator).

For the first fifteen years after the famine depopulation steadily increased. During a scarcity it is the children on whom the calamity falls with the heaviest weight, and until 1785 the old died off without there being any rising generation to step into their places.[109] To add to the general misery the most violent feuds broke out among the landed proprietors. One-third of their land lay unculti-

[108] Paikasht. The English renderings given above are those of Hastings and Francis.

[109] In Beerbhoom, for example.—Letter from Christopher Keating, Esq., Collector, to John Shore, Esq., President of the Board of Revenue, dated 3d July 1789. B. R. R.

vated and each began to entice away the tenants of his neighbour, by offering protection against judicial proceedings and farms at very low rents.[110] As they became more impoverished they went on bidding more eagerly against one another for the husbandmen, till at length the non-resident class obtained their holdings at half-rates.[111] The resident cultivators, unable to compete on these terms, threw up their farms. They had formerly been the wealthiest order of the tillers of the soil, but now they began to look on themselves as an injured class, and so general became the desertion that in 1784, Parliament, acquainted with the signs of outward decay but ignorant of its causes, ordered an inquiry into the reasons that had compelled the agricultural classes 'to abandon and relinquish their lands.'[112] A province cannot be re-peopled, however, by Act of Parliament. The land remained untilled, and in 1789, Lord Cornwallis, after three years' vigilant inquiry, pronounced one-third of the Company's territories in Bengal to be 'a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts.'[113]

[110] Letter from Christopher Keating, Esq., Collector, to John Shore, Esq., President of the Board of Revenue, dated 30th August 1789. From the Board of Revenue to the Collector, dated 10th May 1790, etc. B. R. R.

[111] Strictures and Observations on the Mocurrery System of Landed Property in Bengal, by Gurreeb Doss: with Replies. 8vo. London, 1794. This is a reprint of a somewhat acrimonious discussion between Mr. J. Prinsep and Mr. Thos. Law in the *Morning Chronicle* during 1792. O. C.

[112] 24 Geo. III. 39. O. C.

[113] Minute of the Governor-General, September 18, 1789. See also his letter to the Court of Directors, dated 2d August 1789.

Such was the general state of the province when it passed under British rule. The western principalities, Beerbhoom and Bishenpore, which form the special subject of this volume, had borne their full share of the national calamity. In 1765, four years before the famine, Beerbhoom had been cultivated by close on six thousand rural communes, each with a hamlet in the centre of its lands.[114] In 1771, three years after the famine, only four thousand five hundred of these little communities survived.[115] The cultivators fled from the open country to the cities; but 'even in the large towns,' wrote a Beerbhoom official in 1771, 'there is not a fourth part of the houses inhabited.'[116] The following year, 1772-73, is memorable for the first attempt which Warren Hastings made to adjust the land-tax independently of the Mussulman Minister of the Interior, and the native subordinates, eager to find favour with the redoubted Englishman, returned the number of communes at nearly a hundred more than in 1771-72.[117] But the fact could not be concealed: depopulation went steadily on till 1785, when the number had sunk to four thousand four hundred, and of the six thousand prosperous communes in 1765 close on fifteen

114 Letter from the Collector to the Board of Revenue, dated 3d July 1789, etc. B. R. R.

115 Hustabood Accounts and Papers for the Bengali Year 1178 (A.D. 1771-72). Board of Revenue. C. O. R.

116 Report of the Supervisor, Mr. Higginson, dated 22d February 1771. I. O. R.

117 Beerbhoom Hustabood.—Letter from Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 3d July 1789. B. R. R.

hundred had disappeared and their lands relapsed to jungle.[118] Even among those that were not altogether abandoned many square miles of the richest country lay untilled, and one set of revenue agents after another failed to wring the land-tax out of the people. In 1772, the old farmers having thrown up their task in despair were superseded and dragged down to the debtors' prison in Calcutta for arrears. At each new adjustment of the revenue the same thing took place; the hereditary prince excusing himself from remitting the land-tax to the English treasury, on the grounds that the revenue agents could not collect it, and the revenue agents being cast without mercy into dungeons. When the British undertook the direct management of the district, nearly twenty years after the famine, they found the jail filled with revenue prisoners, not one of whom had a prospect of regaining his liberty.[119] For this state of things the Rajah was not alone responsible. While the country every year became a more total waste, the English Government constantly demanded an increased land-tax. In 1771 more than one-third of the culturable land was returned in the public accounts as 'Deserted;'[120] in 1776 the entries in this column exceed one-half of the whole tillage, four acres lying waste for every seven that remained under

[118] The exact number was 1445.

[119] Letters from Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 1st August 89, etc. B. R. R.

[120] *Palatika.* Hustabood accounts of Beerbhoom for the Bengali year 1178. C. C. R.

cultivation.[121] On the other hand, the Company increased its demand from less than £100,000 sterling in 1772, to close on £112,000 in 1776. The villagers were dragooned into paying the land-tax by Mussulman troops, but notwithstanding the utmost severities the receipts seldom amounted to much more than one-half of the demand.[122]

The state of Beerbhoom at the end of the famine of 1770 will be found officially described by eye-witnesses in Appendix B. Ten years later we find the district a sequestered and an impassable jungle. In ancient times it had been the highway of armies, the favourite battle-field on which was more than once decided the fate of Bengal; in 1780 a small body of Sepoys could with difficulty force their way through its forests. For 120 miles, says a contemporary newspaper correspondent, probably one of the officers of the party, 'they marched through but an extensive wood, all the way a perfect wilderness; sometimes a small village presented itself in the midst of these jungles, with a little cultivated ground around it, hardly sufficient to encamp the two battalions. These woods abound with tigers and bears, which infested the camp every night, but did no other damage than carrying off a child and

[121] Hustabood accounts of Beerbhoom for the Bengali year 1183. C. O. R.

[122]

	Government Demand.	Actual Receipt.
1772, ...	£99,413	£55,207
1773, ...	103,089	62,365
1774, ...	101,799	52,533
1775, ...	100,983	53,997
1776, ...	111,482	63,350

killing some of the gentlemen's hackery bullocks.'[123] The narrator, judging by the obstacles of the route, and ignorant of the past history of the district, magnified the march into an achievement never before accomplished, and nine years later, the jungle continued so dense as to shut off all communication between the two most important towns, and to cause the mails to be carried by a circuit of fifty miles through another district.[124]

As the little rural communities relinquished their hamlets, and drew closer together towards the centre of the district, the wild beasts pressed hungrily on their rear. In vain the Company offered a reward for each tiger's head, sufficient to maintain a peasant's family in comfort for three months; an item of expenditure it deemed so necessary, that when, under extraordinary pressure, it had to suspend all payments, the tiger-money and diet allowance for prisoners were the sole exceptions to the rule.[125] A belt of jungle, filled with wild beasts, formed round each village; the official records frequently speak of the mail-bag being carried off by wild beasts;[126] and after fruitless injunctions to the landholders to clear the forests, Lord Cornwallis was at length compelled to sanction a public grant to keep open the new military road that passed through

[123] *Hicky's Gazette*, Calcutta, 29th April 1780.

[124] Bill for Contingent Charges, dated 29th May 1789. B. R. R.

[125] Letters from the Accountant-General to the Collector of Beerbhoom, dated 29th December 1790 and 28th January 1791. B. R. R.

[126] Letters from Board of Revenue to Collector, dated 11th February 1789, etc. B. R. R.

Beerbhoom.[127] The ravages of the wild elephants were on a larger scale, and their extermination formed one of the most important duties of the Collector for some time after the district passed directly under British rule. In two parishes alone, during the last few years of the native administration, fifty-six villages with their communal lands 'had all been destroyed and gone to jungle, caused by the depredations of the wild elephants;'[128] and an official return states that forty market towns throughout the district had been deserted from the same cause. The Rajah petitioned the Company to use its influence with the Nawab of Bengal[129] to procure the loan of the Viceregal stud of tame elephants, in order to catch the wild ones.[130] The bag was to be made over to his Highness as payment. This assistance not being obtained, the Rajah formally applied for a reduction of the land-tax, in consequence of the district being depopulated by wild elephants. The Collector reported the claim to be just. 'I had ocular proof, on my journey to Deoghur,' he writes; 'marks of their ravages remaining. The poor timid native ties his cot in a tree, to which he retires when the elephants approach, and silently views the destruction of his

[127] Letters from Board of Revenue to Collector, dated 11th February 1789, 30th April 1790, etc. B. R. R.

[128] From the Collector of Beerbhoom to the Board of Revenue, dated April 1790. B. R. R.

[129] Mabarak-ad-Daulat.

[130] From the Collector to the Board, dated 15th October 1790; and the Board's reply, dated 26th *idem*. B. R. R.

cottage, and all the profits of his labour. I saw some of these retreats in my journey, and had the cause of them explained. In Bealputta very few inhabitants remain; and the zemindar's fears for the neighbouring purgunnahs will certainly be realized in the course of a few years, if some method is not fallen on to extirpate those destructive animals.'[131]

It is difficult for Englishmen, accustomed from boyhood to fire-arms, to comprehend the defenceless state of a peasantry armed only with spears and bows against the larger sorts of wild beasts. It is not lack of courage, as every Englishman who has hunted with beaters in the jungles will testify. Indeed, the intrepid skill with which a band of Beerbhoom hill-men surround a tiger, never ceases to astonish those who know the risk. But the herd of elephants is resistless; lifting off roofs, pushing down walls, trampling a village under foot, as if it were a city of sand that a child had built upon the shore. 'Most fortunately for the population of the country,' wrote the greatest elephant-hunter of that period, 'they delight in the sequestered range of the mountain; did they prefer the plain, whole kingdoms would be laid waste.'[132] In many parts of the country the peasantry did not dare to sleep in their houses, lest they should be

[131] From the Collector to the Board, dated 6th August 1791. B. R. R.

[132] Autobiography of the Hon. Robert Lindsay, Collector of Sylhet; circ. 1778 to 1789. Lives of the Lindsays, by Lord Lindsay, vol. iii. p. 190.

buried beneath them during the night, and as late as 1810 the surveyor of a district a little to the north of Beerbhoom reports: 'The alarm that the elephants occasion is exceedingly great. One night that I lay close to the hills, although I had a guard, the men of the village close by my tents retired at night to the trees, and the women hid themselves among the cattle, leaving their huts a prey to the elephants, who know very well where to look for grain. Two nights before, some of them had unroofed a hut in the village, and had eaten up all the grain which a poor family had preserved in its earthen store.'[133] It is right to add, that wild elephants, although they may have become more troublesome as the jungle absorbed the cultivated land after the famine, were dreaded devastators long before 1770. Even in the most prosperous period of the Mussulman rule they infested what are now the richest districts of Bengal, and formed the chief, sometimes indeed the sole, revenue that could be obtained from large and fertile provinces.[134]

The evil seems to have reached its climax about 1786. From this year English supervision, more or less direct, dates in Beerbhoom. The agriculturalists were by no means the only class who fled before the tiger and wild elephant. The

133 History, Antiquities, etc., of Eastern India, from the Buchanan Papers in the E. I. House, vol. ii. p. 14.

134 Analysis of the Bengali Poem Raj-Mala, by the Rev. James Long, p. 19. Pamphlet, 8vo, Calcutta. Lives of the Lindsays, vol. iii. p. 163, etc.

earliest English records disclose the forest hamlets of the iron-smelters deserted; the charcoal-burners driven from their occupation by wild beasts; many factories and market towns abandoned; the cattle trade, which then formed an important branch of the district's commerce, at a stand; and the halting-places, where herds used to rest and fodder on their way from the mountains to the plains, written down as waste.[185]

But tigers and wild elephants were not the most cruel enemies of the peasant. The English found Bengal in the hands of banditti, and the names of successful leaders of the last century, such as Strong-fisted Khan,[186] to be found in every native history, tell a story of rapine and oppression not difficult to read. Many of the principal families throughout the country, being dispossessed by the Mussulman tax-gatherers in whole or part of their lands, lived by plunder; the only difference between the highland and lowland proprietors being, that the former marauded more openly and on a larger scale. The latter, indeed, found it more profitable to shelter banditti on their estates, levying black-mail from the surrounding villages as the price of immunity from depredation, and sharing in the plunder of such as would not come to terms. Their country-houses were robber strongholds, and the early English administrators of Bengal have left

185 Letter from the Collector of Beerbhoom to the Board of Revenue, dated 9th October 1789. B. R. R.

186 Zabbar-dast Khan, famous in the adjoining district of Burdwan.

it on record, that a gang-robbery never occurred without a landed proprietor being at the bottom of it.[137] Bands of cashiered soldiers, the dregs of the Mussulman armies, roamed about, plundering as they went. They frequently dressed themselves in the Company's uniform, with a view to wholesale extortion from the villagers,—a fraud rendered so plausible by the disorderly conduct of our own troops on the line of march, that a series of stringent enactments failed to put it down. Lawlessness breeds lawlessness, and the miserable peasantry, stripped of their hoard for the winter, were forced to become plunderers in turn. Early in 1771, the local officers report 'the frequent firing of villages by the people, whose distress drives them to such acts of despair and villany. Numbers of ryots, who have hitherto borne the first of characters among their neighbours, pursue this last resource to procure themselves a subsistence.'[138] They formed themselves into bands of so-called houseless devotees,[139] and roved about the country in armies fifty thousand strong. 'A set of lawless banditti,' wrote the Council in 1773, 'known under the name of Sanyasis or Faquirs, have long infested these countries; and, under pretence of religious pilgrimage, have been accustomed to traverse the chief part of Bengal, begging, stealing, and plunder-

[137] Answers to Interrogatories, circulated in 1801.

[138] Letter of Mr. Rous, the Supervisor of Rajshie, dated 13th April 1771. I. O. R.

[139] Sanyassis.

ing wherever they go, and as it best suits their convenience to practise.'[140] In the years subsequent to the famine, their ranks were swollen by a crowd of starving peasants who had neither seed nor implements to recommence cultivation with, and the cold weather of 1772 brought them down upon the harvest fields of Lower Bengal, burning, plundering, ravaging, 'in bodies of fifty thousand men.'[141] The collectors called out the military; but after a temporary success our Sepoys 'were at length totally defeated, and Captain Thomas (their leader), with almost the whole party, cut off.'[142] It was not till the close of the winter that the Council could report to the Court of Directors, that a battalion, under an experienced commander, had acted successfully against them;[143] and a month later we find that even this tardy intimation had been premature. On the 31st March 1773, Warren Hastings plainly acknowledges that the commander who had succeeded Captain Thomas 'unhappily underwent the same fate;' that four battalions of the army were then actively engaged against the banditti, but that, in spite of the militia levies called from the landholders, their combined operations had been fruitless. The revenue could not be collected, the inhabitants made common cause with

[140] Letter from the President and Council (Secret Department) to the Court of Directors, dated 15th January 1773, para. 13. I. O. R.

[141] From the same to the same, dated 1st March 1773, para. 16, etc. I. O. R.

[142] From the same to the same, dated 15th January 1773. I. O. R.

[143] Letter of 1st March, para. 16. I. O. R.

the marauders, and the whole rural administration was unhinged. Such incursions were annual episodes in what some have been pleased to represent as the *still life* of Bengal.

Besides those whom destitution or natural depravity had driven to rapine, there existed numerous and prosperous clans who practised robbery as a hereditary calling. The Thugs and Dacoits thought none the worse of themselves for their profession, and were regarded by their countrymen with an awe which in India at that time could hardly be distinguished from veneration. 'I am a Thug of the royal records,' one of them was good enough to explain to an English officer; 'I and my fathers have been Thugs for twenty generations.' 'I have always followed the trade of my ancestors,' urged a celebrated Dacoit; 'my ancestors held this profession before me, and we train boys in the same manner,' said another. So much has been brought to light by the Thuggee and Dacoitee Commissions, that I must confine myself to the five-and-twenty years during which the rural administration was slowly passing into English hands.[144] 'The Dacoits of Bengal,' so runs a State paper written in 1772, 'are not, like the robbers in England, individuals driven to such desperate courses by sudden want. They are robbers by profession, and even by birth. They are formed into regular communities, and

[144] An account of Thuggee and Dacoitee in later years will be found in Mr. Kaye's admirable 'Administration of the East India Company,' part iii. chap. ii. and iii.

their families subsist by the spoils which they bring home to them.'[145] These spoils were frequently brought from great distances; villages high up the Ganges lived by housebreaking in Calcutta; and Warren Hastings distinctly realized that, if the crime were to be put down, not only the actual depredators, but also the remote sharers in the booty, must be united in one common punishment. He went about the work in that straightforward, incisive manner which he always adopted when he had an unpleasant task in hand. He commanded that every convicted Dacoit should be executed; that he should be 'executed in all the forms and terrors of the law' in his native village; that his whole family should be made slaves; and that every inhabitant of the village should be fined. In spite of these severities, however, Dacoitee continued to flourish for more than three-quarters of a century in Bengal. The Dacoits generally effected their depredations in bands of from five to one hundred, by armed attacks in the villages, and in the large towns under cover of confusion occasioned by fire. The conflagrations that resulted threatened to destroy whole cities. In March 1780, a fire occurred in Calcutta that burned down fifteen thousand houses. Nearly two hundred people perished in the flames.[146] Clear cases of incendiarism are constantly recorded, and at length

[145] Letter from the Committee of Circuit to the Council at Fort William, dated Cossimbazaar, 15th August 1772.

[146] Calcutta in the Olden Times, its People, by the Rev. J. Long, p. 37. Pamphlet, 8vo, Calcutta.

it was gravely 'recommended that those owning straw-houses should have a long bamboo with three hooks at the end to catch the villains.'[147] Organized outrages were committed within ear-shot of what are now the most fashionable resorts of the capital.* 'A few nights ago,' the Calcutta paper of 1780 announced, 'four armed men entered the houses of a moorman near Chowringhee, and carried off his daughter.' Old inhabitants remember the time when no native would venture out at night with a good shawl on; and it was the invariable practice, even in English mansions, for the porter to shut the outer door at the commencement of each meal, and not to open it till the butler brought him word that the plate was safely locked up.

In Beerbhoom and along the western frontier these disorders had reached a pitch hardly to be distinguished from chronic civil war. 'For ages'— an accurate antiquarian thus describes the inhabitants of the country adjoining Beerbhoom on the north—'they were untamed thieves and murderers, engaging in forays on the plains; while the Mussulman zemindars, in reprisal, shot them as dogs.'[148] The Rajah of Beerbhoom's territory embraced a large tract of low country, where the people lived within walled cities in a state of constant siege; and an undefined but extensive highland region, inhabited by a race different in origin, in language,

[147] Calcutta in the Olden Times, its People, by the Rev. J. Long, p. 37. Pamphlet, 8vo, Calcutta.

[148] Rajmahal. Pamphlet, p. 21.

in religion, from the people of the plains, and separated from them by deadly and immemorial feuds. 'From the time of the Mahomedan kings,' writes the revenue surveyor of an adjacent district, 'these hill people were the scourge and terror of the neighbouring districts, from whose inhabitants they levied black-mail; and when that could not be obtained, armed bands, fully equipped with powerful bamboo bows and arrows, descended from the hills, murdered all who opposed their progress, pillaged the country far and near, and retreating to their jungly fortress, where no one dared to follow them, defied their victims.'[149] In the province to the north of Beerbhoom, for a hundred miles along the Ganges, no boat dared to moor after dark on the southern bank; the mails were constantly robbed; treasure parties were cut off; all traffic on the imperial road for a time ceased; and a line of crumbling forts stretching south-west from Bhaugulpore still bears witness to the insecurity of life and property in the old debateable land.

General statements, however, do not tell so strongly as particular facts; and, lest some dulcet strain of Indian Bucolics, under hereditary chiefs, should still linger in the reader's memory, I shall relate minutely the experiences of Beerbhoom and Bishenpore during the first two years of which a complete record exists. The disorders which induced Lord Cornwallis to place the districts under the direct supervision of an English officer, have

149 Captain Sherwill's Report, p. 26. Folio. C. O. R.

been already narrated. The last letter referring to Beerbhoom under its native chief, gives notice that an organized raid by an army of banditti a thousand strong was about to take place.[150] The first letter in the records of the English local administration thankfully acknowledges the arrival of a full company of Sepoys, and shortly after the detachment had to be doubled.[151] There is every reason to believe that, during the brief period which had intervened between these letters, the efforts of Mr. Sherbourne to repress the banditti had been, so far as the time permitted, successful; and the following pages present a picture modified and toned down, rather than exaggerated, of the state in which the English found Bengal, and of the legacy of troubles bequeathed to them by Mussulman misrule.

The chief English officer exercised, under the style of Collector, the functions of Commander-in-Chief and Civil Governor within his jurisdiction. The military side of his duties, indeed, received during several years undue prominence. At the beginning of each cold weather, when the great harvest of the year approached, he furnished the officer at the head of his troops with a list of passes which the Sepoys were to defend until the banditti should retire into quarters for the next rainy

[150] From Edward Otto Ives to the Governor-General in Council. B. J. R.

[151] From Christopher Keating, Esq., Collector, to the Board of Revenue, dated 22d November 1788. B. R. R.

season. On a proposition being made to reduce the strength of his force, he plainly stated that he would not be responsible for holding the district; and a folio volume, labelled 'Military Correspondence,' barely contains his communications with the senior captain during three years. Mr. Keating,[152] the first Collector whose records survive, had not enjoyed his appointment two months before he found himself compelled to call out the troops against a band of marauders five hundred strong, who 'had made a descent on' a market town within two hours' ride from the English capital, and murdered or frightened away the inhabitants 'of between thirty and forty villages.'[153] A few weeks later (February 1789), the hill-men broke through the cordon of outposts *en masse*, and spread 'their depredations throughout the interior villages of the district.'[154] Panic and bloodshed reigned; the outposts were hastily recalled from the frontier passes; and on the 21st of February 1789, we find Mr. Keating levying a militia to act with the regulars against the banditti who were sacking the country towns 'in parties of three and four hundred men, well found in arms.' The evil was not to be so easily dealt with, however, and the Governor-

152 Christopher Keating landed in Calcutta July 1767, as a writer; appointed Collector of Beerbhoom 29th October 1788; appointed Senior Judge of the Court of Moorshedabad from 1st May 1793, but did not leave Beerbhoom till the 6th August; appears as a Senior Merchant in the Civil List of 1804. C. O. R.

153 Letter from the Collector to Lieut. J. F. Smith, dated 10th January 1789 B. R. R.

154 Military Correspondence, p. 15. B. R. R.

General in Council had eventually to direct the Collectors of the several adjoining districts to unite their whole forces; all questions of jurisdiction were sunk;[155] a battle was fought, and the banditti were chased far into the mountains. But a piece of petty official jealousy prevented the success from being complete. The confederates had omitted to take the Collector of a neighbouring district into their councils, and the bandits found shelter within his jurisdiction. 'By a wounded Sepoy, who is arrived from our parties,' wrote the indignant Mr. Keating, 'I understand they have had a smart skirmish with the thieves near the borders of Pacheate; but in their pursuit were stopped by the Collector's guards, who, instead of assisting the business, prevented their advancing into that district, and sheltered some of the banditti's followers. The Sepoy tells me that, in consequence of [this interference by] the Pacheate people, ours have thought it expedient to seize four or five of them who are coming in to answer for their conduct.'[156] The wrath of the Pacheate Collector at the capture of his guards by a military force in time of peace, and the mutual reproaches which followed, may easily be conceived.

The disorders in Bishenpore would, in any less troubled time, have been called rebellion. The Rajah had been imprisoned for arrears of the land-

155 From Christopher Keating to Laurence Mercer, Collector of Burdwan, dated 16th February 1789. B. R. R.

156 From the same to the same, dated 9th April 1789.

tax; the head assistant to the Collector, Mr. Hesilrige,[157] was in charge of his estates, and the inhabitants made common cause with the banditti to oppose the Government. In June 1789, a detachment was hurried out to support the civil power; eight days afterwards a reinforcement followed, too late however to save the chief manufacturing town in the district from being sacked in open day-light.[158] Next month, Mr. Keating reported to Government that the marauders, having crossed the Adji in 'a large party armed with tulwars (swords) and matchlocks,' had established themselves in Beerbhoom, and that their reduction would simply be a question of military force.

The rainy season, however, came to the aid of the authorities. The plunderers, laden with spoil, and leaving a sufficient force to hold Bishenpore as a basis for their operations in the next cold weather, retreated to their strongholds; and Mr. Keating took advantage of the lull to devise a more elaborate system for warding the frontier. He represented[159] to Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General, that the existing military force was insufficient to hold the district; that the contingents furnished by the hereditary wardens of the marches

157 Afterwards Sir Arthur Hesilrige, Bart. Landed as a writer in 1773; assistant and occasionally acting Collector of Beerbhoom or Bishenpore, from 25th April 1786 to 9th July, when he was removed on a charge of embezzlement; clears himself and is appointed Collector of Jessore from the 1st May 1793. Appears as Senior Merchant in the Civil List of 1804.

158 Elambazaar on the Adji.

159 Letter dated 16th October 1789. B. R. R.

were undisciplined, faint-hearted, more disposed to act with the plunderers than against them; and that to secure peace to the lowlands, it was absolutely necessary to station a guard of picked soldiers from the regular army at each of the passes. A nucleus would thus be formed round which the irregular troops might gather. By return of post, with a promptitude that lets us into the secret of Lord Cornwallis' success as an Indian administrator, came back an answer 'that the Commander-in-Chief has been requested to detach' a sufficient force which the Collector 'will station at the different ghauts (passes), through which the Dacoits generally make their inroads into the low country.' In November, the six most important passes were occupied, a detachment was stationed in Bishenpore, another occupied the chief manufacturing town on the Adji (the one that had been sacked the previous summer), to prevent the banditti from crossing the river. The Adji divides the united district into two parts, Bishenpore on the south, Beerbhoom on the north; and these measures, while they restored comparative quiet to the former, left the latter defenceless. 'Scarce a night passes,' wrote Mr. Keating, 'without some daring robbery.' The military, harassed by night marches, and scattered about in small bands, were unable to cope with the banditti, or even to protect the principal towns. On the 25th of November 1789, the commanding officer reported that only four men remained to guard the Government offices in the capital; and a few weeks

later he declared himself unable to furnish an escort sufficient to ensure the safety of a treasure party through the district. At length, on the 5th of June, Raj-Nagar, the ancient capital and the seat of the hereditary princes, fell into the hands of the banditti.[180] More than five centuries had elapsed since a similar calamity had befallen Beerbhoom. In 1244 A.D., the wild tribes from the south-west had sacked the city, and history, repeating itself in the fortunes of the obscurest district not less faithfully than in the revolutions of empires, discloses the same outrages at the close as at the commencement of Mussulman rule.

Mr. Keating's position was a difficult one. He had to guard Bishenpore on the south of the Adji, Beerbhoom on the north, and above all, the passes along the western frontier. Beerbhoom, as the headquarters of the English power, was of the first importance; but if he called in the troops from Bishenpore, the calamities of the preceding year would be repeated; and if he withdrew the outposts from the western passes, the entire district, north and south, would be at the mercy of the hill-men. He decided that it was better to let the marauders riot for a time on the south of the Adji, than to open up his entire frontier. An express summoned the detachments from Bishenpore by forced marches to the rescue of Beerbhoom; but no

[180] Gya, the capital of the adjoining province of Bahar, had been sacked by marauders a year before.—Letter from A. Seton, Esq., Acting-Collector of Bahar, to the Collector of Beerbhoom, dated 23d April 1789.

sooner had they crossed the river than tidings came that Bishenpore was itself in the hands of 'insurgents assembled in number nearly one thousand.' The rebellion spread into adjoining jurisdictions, and the Collectors on the south bitterly reproached Mr. Keating with having sacrificed the peace of many districts for the sake of maintaining intact the outposts along the frontier of his own. The more strictly these passes were guarded, the greater the number of marauders who flocked by a circuitous route into the unprotected country on the south of the Adji. Their outrages passed all bounds; the approaching rains, by suspending military operations, threatened to leave them in possession of Bishenpore for several months; till at last the peasantry, wishing for death rather than life, rose against the oppressors whom they had a year ago welcomed as allies, and the evil began to work its own cure. The marauders of Bishenpore underwent the fate of the Abyssinian slave-troops in Bengal three hundred years before, being shut out of the walled cities, decoyed into the woods by twos and threes, set upon by bands of infuriated peasants, and ignobly beaten to death by clubs. In mid-summer 1790 Mr. Keating ordered the senior captain 'to station a military guard with an officer at Bishenpore, whose sole business I propose to be that of receiving all thieves and Dacoits that shall be sent in.'

Thus ended the first two years of which we possess a complete record of British rule in Beer-

bhoom. From their calamities we can imagine what had gone before. The amount of property destroyed by the plunderers may be estimated from an entry in a state document drawn up a few years previously. 'Deduct,' saith the deed for the Benares district for the year 1782, 'deduct the devastations, etc., of two months' disturbances, Sicca rupees 666,666 : 10 : 10,'[161] or over £70,000 sterling. If this were the result of two months, what must have been the destruction during two years? Some time afterwards, when quiet had been imperiously enforced, Mr. Keating calmly and rather despondently reviewed the result of his labours. 'Beerbhoom,' he wrote, 'is surrounded on the south-west and west by the great western jungle, which has long protected from the vigilance of justice numerous gangs of Dacoits, who there take up their refuge and commit their depredations on the neighbouring defenceless ryots. Towns once populous are now deserted; the manufactures are decayed; and where commerce flourished, only a few poor and wretched hovels are seen. These pernicious effects are visible along the whole course of the Adji, particularly in the decay of Elambazaar (the town sacked in 1789), and the almost complete desertion of the once large trading town of Sacaracoonda. When these places on the frontier became from their poverty no longer an object to the Dacoits, their depredations were extended into the

161 Treaties and Engagements with the Native Princes, etc., of Asia, p. 93. Quarto (1812).

heart of the district, and towns have been plundered and people murdered within two coss (four miles) of the Collector's house, by banditti amounting to upwards of three hundred men.'[162]

This unvarnished picture of devastation is best left without any finishing stroke. From that period to the Santal war, thirteen years ago, armed opposition to the Government has been unknown in Beerbhoom. Even during those first troubled years of British rule, the peasantry obtained a degree of protection that they had not enjoyed for many years previously. Tillage extended; and between the time that Mr. Foley was sent to 'superintend' Beerbhoom and that at which Mr. Keating finally elaborated his system of frontier passes, three hundred and twenty-eight rural communes had been repeopled and brought once more under cultivation.[163] This represents an increase of more than seven per cent. to the total number of communes in the district. During the two calamitous years with which we are most familiar, the improvement was rapid. In November 1788 Mr. Keating found the banditti free to roam over the district. He established outposts to check the constant invasions of marauders from the hill country; but his frontier passes were forced, and to all appearance the district was no safer in 1789 than when he took over charge. The disasters of

[162] From the Collector to the Board of Revenue, dated 1st June 1792. B. R. R.

[163] Statistics in a Report from the Collector to the Board of Revenue, dated 3d July 1789.

his first winter, however, had taught him what was needed. The outposts, strengthened by reinforcements, were maintained intact; and the banditti, unable to find an entrance, made a detour to the south, and massed themselves on that side of the Adji. Before the rains of 1790 set in, the inhabitants had joined heartily with the Government against the common enemy; and the robber-hordes of Beerbhoom, like the men of Gaza, seemed to have been assembled in one spot only to render their destruction more complete.

As soon as order was established, the amending hand rapidly made itself felt. Organized robberies and armed feuds between the landholders have from time to time disturbed the repose of the district, but on a scale so trifling as barely to keep alive the remembrance of the old troubles, as the names of Singh-bhum (Lion-land), Sher-ghar (Tiger-town), Sher-ghati (Tiger-ford), Shikar-pur (Hunting-hamlet), stand as scarcely recognised memorials of the days when the margin of cultivation receded before wild beasts. In 1802 Sir Henry Strachey mentions Beerbhoom as a part of the country remarkably free from gang-robbery; it is now, perhaps, the very quietest district in Bengal; and a recent public document, in curious unconsciousness of the past, describes it as still enjoying 'its old immunity from crime.'

Nor has the change been less marked with regard to wild animals. It is now impossible to find an undomesticated elephant, and very rarely

possible to hear of a tiger throughout the length and breadth of the district. The last tiger-hunt took place in May 1864. A band of hill-men, in number about five hundred, beat many square miles of jungle, but not a bear or a leopard, much less a tiger or an elephant, could they turn out. The largest thing we saw was a small spotted deer. Bears and leopards still survive in the recesses of the woods, but they never trouble the inhabitants, and their capture is as much an event as the shooting of an eagle in the Scottish Highlands.

For the disorders which the English found in Bengal the native aristocracy cannot be held responsible. At that period, Mussulman oppression and public calamities had reduced them to a state in which they could no longer discharge their functions as the natural leaders of the people. But the immemorial miseries of the Bengali spring from a much deeper source. A strong spirit of nationality would have rendered such protracted oppression impossible; the want of this spirit in an Asiatic country during the spread of Islam rendered conquest and national abasement inevitable. At a time when English statesmen in Bengal are labouring to develop a self-supporting national life among the heterogeneous millions over whom they have been called to rule, it is well accurately to understand the reasons why a people so industrious, so patient, and yet so shrewdly quick-witted, have never been a nation. As the same reasons lie at the root of much that is otherwise inexplicable in

the home life and agrarian system of the Bengali, such an inquiry, although it will lead away from my immediate subject-matter, may with great propriety be conducted in a preliminary volume of Rural Annals. The two following chapters, therefore, will treat at some length of the elemental and structural defects that have hitherto incapacitated the hybrid multitudes of Bengal from becoming a nation.

CHAPTER III.

THE ETHNICAL ELEMENTS OF THE LOWLAND POPULATION OF BENGAL.

IN the year 1790 the United District, after a full half-century of invasion and rapine, obtained rest, and its new rulers had leisure to survey the population that had passed under their care. In Bishenpore the Rajah, his aristocracy, and the whole people were Hindus. On the other bank of the Adji the Beerbhoom house, with several Mussulman families who had grown rich in its service, asserted Afghan or Pathan descent, and disdained to mingle their northern blood with the misbelieving natives. Separated from their subjects by religion, a foreign speech, and the pride of birth, they formed a class socially important, but numerically small. The mass of the people consisted of two races which in intellect, language, and in everything that makes a nation great or ignoble, have been selected to represent the highest and the lowest types of mankind. The aboriginal tribes of Bengal, pushed back from the rich valley by the Aryans, made a final stand for existence among the highlands of Beerbhoom; and the same mountains which were

fixed in pre-historic times as landmarks between the races, accurately demarcate their territories at this day. The composite people evolved from two stocks, belonging to very unequal degrees of civilisation, when brought closely and permanently into contact, presents one of the most interesting questions with which history has to deal. How the Aryan and the Aboriginal solved this problem, the terms on which they have to a certain extent united, and the ethnical compromises to which they have had to submit, form the subject of this chapter.

The inquiry leads us back to that far-off time which we love to associate with patriarchal stillness.[1] Yet the echoes of ancient life in India little resemble a Sicilian Idyl or the strains of Pan's pipe, but strike the ear rather as the cries of oppressed and wandering nations, of people in constant motion and pain. Early Indian researches, however, while they make havoc of the pastoral landscapes of Genesis and Job, have a consolation peculiarly suited to this age. They plainly tell us, that as in Europe, so in Asia, the primitive state of mankind was a state of unrest; and that civilisation, despite its exactions and nervous city life, is a state of repose.

Our earliest glimpses of the human family in

[1] 'The India of the Vedic books presents to M. Michelet's view a domestic picture of purity, dignity, and sweetness,' says the Saturday Reviewer of M. Michelet's 'Bible de l'Humanité' (Paris: Chamerot, 1864). Little as is known of Sanskrit history, enough has been ascertained to dispel M. Michelet's pretty illusion of the millions of meditative Aryans chaunting the Ramayana during three or four thousand years.

India disclose two tribes of widely different origin, struggling for the mastery. In the primitive time, which lies on the horizon even of inductive history, a tall, fair-complexioned race passed the Himalaya. They came of a conquering stock. They had known the safety and the plenty which can only be enjoyed in regular communities. They brought with them a store of legends and devotional strains; and chief of all, they were at the time of their migration southward through Bengal, if not at their first arrival in India, imbued with that high sense of nationality which burns in the hearts of a people who believe themselves the depositary of a divine revelation.[2] There is no record of the new-comers' first struggle for life with the people of the land. We know not the date of their setting out, nor the names of their leaders. We have no tales to tell like those which have interested seventy generations in the weather-beaten band who drew up their galleys on the sands of Cumæ. The philologer can only assert that a branch of a noble stock won for themselves a home

[2] European scholars have assigned the Vedic claims to inspiration to the commentators rather than to the composers of the Hymns. The commentators unquestionably developed these claims, but Hindu faith has ever asserted the inspiration of the sacred texts. Such passages as the following in the Vedas themselves leave the devout but unsceptical pundit little room for doubt. 'The holy sages of old who talked about divine truths with the gods.'—Rig Veda, i. 179. 'The wise, the well-knowing one, who hath taught us, he hath declared the secrets of the heavens.'—Rig Veda, vii. 87. 'The gods gave birth first to the hymn, then to the fire, then to the offering.'—Rig Veda, viii. 88. The question is comprehensively discussed in Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Part iii., London, Octavo, 1861.

among numerous but inferior tribes, and that before the dawn of history the children of the soil had been reduced to villeinage, or driven back into the forest.

The emigrants belonged to that prolific race which, under the title of Aryan, literally Noble, radiated from Central Asia to the extremities of the ancient world. One branch established a powerful state and a highly spiritual creed on the borders of China; another founded the Persian dynasty; a third built Athens and Lacedæmon; a fourth, the City of the Seven Hills. A distant colony of the same race excavated silver ore in pre-historic Spain; and the earliest glimpses we get at our own England disclose an Aryan settlement, fishing in its willow canoes and working in the mines of Cornwall. The Aryan speech has formed the basis of the languages of half of Asia, and of nearly the whole of Europe; it is now conquering for itself the forests of the New World, and carrying Indo-Germanic culture to island empires in the Southern Ocean. The history of the ancient world, as understood by classical scholars, is the history of a few Aryan settlements on the shores of the Mediterranean; and that wide term, modern civilisation, merely means the civilisation of the western families of the same race.

The Vedic literature exhibits the Indian branch of the Aryans settled in their new homes. By whatever route they travelled, there is little doubt that their first settlements lay in the well-watered

valleys of North-western Hindusthan. The seven rivers of the Punjab, indeed, would seem to form a common remembrance of both the Indian and Persian branches of the race; and this circumstance gives additional probability to the views of those scholars who maintain that the schism between the Vedic and the Avestic faiths took place on the Indian side of the Himalaya.[3] In its subsequent wanderings through India, the Sanskrit race has never forgotten its primitive northern home. The land of pure speech;[4] the source of divine knowledge; the fountainhead of holy waters; the scene of the birth, the trials, and the glorious espousals of Uma;[5] the realm of the mystic king Himalaya;[6] the region in which Arjuna strove single-handed with the Great God,[7] and, although defeated like Jacob of old, won a blessing and the irresistible weapon from the Deity;—these and numberless other

[3] The Hapta Hendu of the Vendidad are plainly the same as the Sapta Sindhavas of the Vedic Hymns. This is only one of many coincidences indicating a common origin of the now widely severed faiths. Haug points out that the thoroughly Sanskrit Mantra appears in the Zendavesta as Mânthra, and that Zoroaster was the Mânthran, or giver of the Avestic Manthras. (Aitareya Brahmanam, 2 vols., Trübner, 1863.) Spiegel has shown, in his Introductory Discourse to the Avesta, that Yima is the same as the Sanskrit Yama. Cf. Muir's Sanskrit Texts, vol. ii. pp. 293, 294, and his admirable pamphlet 'Yama,' 8vo, London 1865.

[4] Sanskrit Texts, ii. 338. 8vo, 1860.

[5] The beautiful legend of Uma formed the introduction to the Kumara Sambhava, and is now all that remains of it.

[6] Kumara Sambhava, by Kalidasa. Canto i.

[7] Mahadeva. 'Uttara Kuru, the Elysium in the remotest north, may be most properly regarded as an ideal picture created by the imagination of a life of tranquil felicity.'—Lassen, Ind. Antiq. i. p. 511.

epithets and legends all point to the time when the Sanskrit race, still on its pilgrimage, halted for a while in its beloved north. There was its Olympus; there eloquence descended from heaven among men; and there the abodes of the blessed cluster beneath the shadow of the golden mountain, or cast their reflections on the twin sacred lakes.[8] One valley in particular left an ineffaceable impression. It has become the Holy Land of the Indo-Aryans, and the river[9] that watered it was long remembered with the affection and devout regard which the Jordan excites among the dispersed of the Jews.

From this happy valley the settlers threw off colonies east and south, and before the compilation of their customs into a national code had conquered all Bengal. Manu has some curious verses on the Sanskrit geography of his time, which, as recently illustrated by the scholarship of Dr. Muir, throw a new and conclusive light on the spread of Aryan civilisation in India. Manu's civilised world is in the shape of a comet, with its eye in the north-west of India, and a broad tail spreading south-east to the Bay of Bengal. He divides it into four regions, each less pure as it is more distant from the starting-point in the north, and each representing Aryan migrations at widely-separated epochs.

First there was the northern valley, the Holy Land itself, described by Manu as 'lying between

Manosaravara and Ravana-prada.
The Saraswati.

the two sacred rivers,[10] fashioned of God and called by the name of the Creator.'[11] South-east of the Holy Land, and adjoining to it, lay the Land of the Sacred Singers.[12] This marks the first advance of the Sanskrit Pomœrium. The later portion, at least, of the Vedic hymns was composed within it, and the places of pilgrimage at every confluence of its streams bear witness to a sanctity hardly less venerable than that of the Holy Land itself. 'From a Brahman born in this land, let every man on the earth learn each his own duties.'[13]

But not even this extension would suffice for the growing numbers of the people, and the next stride was a wide one. It embraced what Manu accurately calls the Middle Land,[14] including the whole river system of Upper India, from the Himalayas on the north to the Vindhya ranges on the south, and from Allahabad on the east to where the sacred river was fabled to hide itself from the impure races beneath the sands of the western desert. The colonization of this vast tract seems not to have commenced till the close of the Vedic era, and it must have been the slow work of ages. In it the simple faith of the singers was first adorned with stately rites, and then extinguished beneath them. It beheld the race progress from a loose

10 The Saraswati and the Drishadvati.

11 Devanirmittam desham Brahmavarttam. Manava Dharma Sastra, lib. ii. sloka 17, Cox and Baylis, 4to, 1825. Muir's Sanskrit Texts, ii. 418.

12 Brahmarshidesha.

13 Manava Dharma Sastra, ii. 20.

14 Madhya-desha. *Id.* ii. 21.

confederacy of patriarchal communities into several well-knit nations, each secured by a strong central force, but disfigured by distinctions of caste, destined in the end to be the ruin of the Sanskrit people. The compilers of the land-law recorded in the Book of Manu, if not actual residents of the Middle Land, were so closely identified with it, as to look upon it as the focus of their race; and it is certain that the treatise which goes by Manu's name could not have been written till after the Indian Aryans had settled down into the sort of civilisation which the Middle Land developed.

These three regions must long have furnished sufficient territory for the race; and no one who knows what a terrible thing an Indian river is, with its midnight hurricanes, its uncontrollable currents, its whirlpools and sheets of treacherous calm, will wonder that the Aryans hesitated to embark for the lower valley of the Ganges. But river courses have ever formed the high roads of nations, and sooner or later the Ganges gave a direction to the Sanskrit line of march through Bengal. Like the hordes of Northern Europe under similar circumstances, 'they followed the unknown course of the river, confident in their valour and careless of whatever power might oppose them;'[16] and before the compilation of their National Customs, a work probably performed by several hands, but popularly ascribed to Manu, they had spread themselves over the whole of Bengal, 'from the Eastern even to

[16] Gibbon.

the Western Ocean.'[16] This tract Manu calls the Aryan Pale. It comprised the entire Sanskrit world of his time. Beyond it all was *terra incognita*, peopled, according to Sanskrit writers, by giants and raw-eaters,—regions where the black antelope refused to graze, and in which the sacrificing Aryan was forbidden to dwell.

We are too much accustomed to speak of India as a single country, and of its inhabitants as a single nation; but the truth is, that as regards its history, its extent, and its population, India displays the diversities rather of a continent than of a single State. Our mistake arises from the customs or beliefs of particular parts being falsely predicated of the whole, and from isolated facts being magnified into general conclusions. The popular English mind, accustomed to regard the Indian Empire as a political unit among British dependencies, has come to look upon the component parts of that unit as historically and socially one. Wide differences of race and creed are known to exist, but the recognition is dim and speculative, rather than practically and substantially realized. Setting aside the Mussulmans and their faith, it is generally supposed that the inhabitants of India are, and for ages have been, Hindus; that the religion of India since the beginning of history has been the Hindu religion; and that from time immemorial Indian society has been artificially divided into four classes, known as the Hindu Castes. Such opinions

[16] Manu, ii. 22.

have led to a complete misunderstanding of the Indian people,—a misunderstanding which warps our whole political dealings with India, and which stands as a barrier between our eastern subjects and that new order of things, with its more active humanity and purer creed, of which England is the messenger and representative to the Asiatic world.

The civilisation which is popularly supposed to have been the civilisation of ancient India, and which is represented by the Brahmanas and the Book of Manu, was in its integrity confined to the northern country, termed by Manu the Middle Land, and now known as the North-west Provinces and Punjab. The active duties of life pressed lightly upon the conquerors in the thoroughly vanquished north. An age of reflection followed an age of exertion, and the Aryans subsided into the mild-eyed philosophers whom Megasthenes found conversing amid their mango groves chiefly on life and death. The sacred texts were annotated, and their simple prayers elaborated into a complicated and costly superstition. A meditative generation went to work on the sayings of their practical fathers, determined to elicit hidden meanings from everything. The objective was fined down to the subjective; an observation on the weather furnished a saving doctrine of religion; and from a thanksgiving for victory a whole theological system was evolved. Schools wrangled, sects split words, ceremony was piled upon ceremony, till at length the highest object of Aryan

existence became the propagation of grammatical enigmas, or the successful performance of a sacrifice which should occupy three generations, and extend over more than one hundred years.[17] Of such refinements the Aryan emigrants in Lower Bengal knew nothing. At the time of their setting out, their countrymen were workers rather than thinkers: philosophy did not easily travel through the jungles of the southern valley; and the settlers had to consider not so much why they existed, as by what means they were to continue to exist. Their opponents were not rival pandits armed with new interpretations, but the black squat races with sharp spears and poisoned arrows in their hands. It was not till historic times that the Hindus of Bengal Proper accepted Hinduism in the full sense of the word. Buddhism, which found arrayed against it in the north a stately phalanx of religious beliefs, a host of time-honoured rites and vested interests, obtained in Lower Bengal a fair hearing, such as a new creed might receive from a people who had not developed a high form of religion for themselves. Moreover, Buddhism won its easiest and most permanent conquests in the countries outside the Middle Land; and to this day its monuments, now turned into Hindu temples, form the most conspicuous pieces of architecture in the districts adjoining Beerbhoom. The settlers in the

[17] Haug speaks of sacrificial sessions lasting even one thousand years, and refers to the Mahabharata iii. 10513 for an example.—Aitareya Brahmanam, vol. i. p. 6 and footnote.

Lower Valley must either have quickly forgotten the distinctive doctrines of Aryan faith as professed in the Middle Land, or they must have started southwards before those doctrines were evolved. They make their first appearance in history as Buddhists, not as Hindus: their kings were aboriginal, not Aryan; and the Celts had listened to Christian anthems in Iona centuries before the mixed Bengali people accepted their present religion. After their conversion they repeatedly and consciously supplemented their meagre Hinduism with importations from the Middle Land; and one of their first traditions, in which we touch firm historic ground, represents the King of Gour bringing priests from the north to initiate his Brahmans in sacrifices common for ages in Upper India, but which the priests of Bengal Proper knew not how to perform. No one can study minutely the local monuments and traditions of the Lower Valley, without coming to the conviction that the Hindu creed, as laid down in Manu and the Brahmanas, is a comparatively modern importation from the north, and that Buddhism was the first form of an elaborated religious belief which the Bengali people received[18]

[18] I limit the above remarks to Bengal Proper, the province to the south-east of Magadha (Bahar), in which latter, from its proximity to the Middle Land, Brahmanical influences were stronger. Until the fourth century A.D. the celebrated tooth of Buddha was kept at Jagannath, then the Jerusalem of the Buddhists, as it is now of the Hindus. Prinsep, Lassen, and Burnouf have proved, partly from manuscripts, principally from inscriptions, that Buddhism was prevalent in many parts of India from 300 B.C. to 400 A.D.

But the habit of predicating of the whole of India what are in reality local customs or beliefs, has exercised a less injurious effect upon the popular ideas concerning Indian faith, than upon the views which statesmen have adopted with regard to the social institutions and practical life of the Indian people. We have been so long accustomed to hear Indian society termed rigid and artificial, that it will require a somewhat lengthy disquisition to prove that caste, as described by Manu and popularly predicated of the whole Hindus, is in truth only predicable of the Middle Land. It will be found, however, that Indian caste in general, and particularly in Lower Bengal, is neither rigid nor artificial, but is built upon the universal and natural basis of an ancient society—the conquerors and the conquered. Manu's four-fold classification of Brahmans, Kshatryas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, has a stiffness and an inertia about it very discouraging to Indian social reformers, and affords an excuse for inaction that might otherwise

The Chinese travellers Fa Hian and Hiuan Thsang are evidence of its existence down to the seventh century. The kings of Bengal, with Gour as their capital—a dynasty that reigned from 785 to 1040 A.D.—were Buddhists at least until 900 A.D.; and the creed lurked in various out of the way places, such as the highlands of Beerbhoom and Orissa, until the time of the English Plantagenets. The chief temple within the present district of Beerbhoom is of Buddhist origin.—Rajmahal, p. 19, etc. Notes and Queries suggested by a visit to Orissa, 8vo pamphlet, p. 2. History, etc., of Eastern India, from the Buchanan Papers, vols. i. and ii. Survey Report of Beerbhoom, p. 14, by Captain Sherwill, 4to, Calcutta 1855. Saint-Hilaire's 'Le Bouddha et sa Religion,' 8vo, Paris 1862. Sir E. Tennent's Ceylon, parts iii. and iv.

be stigmatized as sloth. The following pages will show this alleged inertia and fourfold classification to be disproved by the history of the people, and will exhibit the population of Bengal as naturally composed of two distinct ethnical elements.

In the Middle Land, peace and civil security developed social distinctions which the southern emigrants, engaged in constant warfare with the aborigines, had neither leisure to think of nor wealth to support. It is impossible to give the date at which the rise of caste took place, but it is easy to say at what epoch it did not exist, when it was beginning to make its influence felt, and when it had grown into a full-blown dominant institution in the land. The Rig Veda knows little or nothing of caste, although it contains verses which were afterwards twisted into an authoritative sanction for it.[19] As the religious system of the Hindus developed, so also did their social distinctions; and the Yajur Veda places beyond doubt, that in the district in which it was written, Brahmanism had already introduced complicated religious forms, and that society had acquiesced to a certain extent in the cruel differences between man and man that Brahmanism implies. Before the compilation of national customs known as the Book of Manu, caste had attained its final development. The Book of Manu, however, accurately represented the state

[19] The Purusha Sukta (R. V. x. 90). The allegorical nature of this hymn is set forth in the Sanskrit Texts, part i. Dr. Muir, however, has kindly shown me the proof sheets of his 2d edition, proving that the R. V. was not so unconscious of caste as some have alleged.

of Indian society in only a single province—the Middle Land. On the west, caste never crossed the Indus, and it is doubtful whether it reached by some hundreds of miles the bank of that river. The Rajputs did not accept a fourfold classification until within historic times. Beyond the Indus stretched the Bahika land, peopled with Sanskrit-speaking tribes, who held that God had made all men equal, and that He was to be worshipped by no priestly formulas. Beyond them, again, the whole Aryans of Cashmir are said to be of one caste;[20] and indeed everywhere west of the Middle Land, a formal fourfold classification of the people such as Manu records is unknown. These Sanskrit-speaking nations on the west, who, rejecting the civilisation of the Middle Land, stood out for the simple faith and customs of their ancestors, are everywhere spoken of in the Brahmanical section of Sanskrit literature with scorn and hatred. The accepting or rejecting of caste implied the accepting or rejecting of the whole Brahmanical ritual, and so in process of time it became the great issue between the Aryans of the Middle Land and those of the west. The Brahmanized Hindus tried to force their system on their fellow-countrymen; sometimes peaceably or by the bribe of admission into the highest caste,[21]

20 I limit this statement expressly to the *Aryan* population of Cashmir: the remains of an aboriginal race, with the mixed castes that sprung from it, exist there as elsewhere throughout in India.

21 More than one Sanskrit legend relates how princes belonging to the inferior classes were adopted into the Brahman caste. The Brahmans tell the stories to suit their own purposes; but I believe that these legends record, under a thin disguise, the spread of the

but more often by a fierce religious warfare, which has left its intolerant stamp upon all Sanskrit literature subsequent to the Vedic hymns, and one of whose episodes forms the first national struggle recorded in Sanskrit history.[22] Caste soon became the *differentia* of the Brahmanized Aryans; and Manu, hitting the truth nearer than he guessed, held that the Greeks and Persians were sprung from errant Kshatryas who had lost their caste.[23]

Manu gives the Himalayas as the northern, and the Vindhya range as the southern boundary of the Middle Land. Beyond those mountains it is certain that caste, as represented by the rigid fourfold classification in Manu, never penetrated. Entire communities of Aryans in southern India claim to be of the Brahman caste, and when a Kshatryan family or colony is found among such a population, its foreign origin or comparatively recent migration southwards can generally be ascertained. Mixed castes abound to the south of the Vindhyas, as to the north, east, and west of them; but these mixed castes arose not from intermarriage between the first three castes mentioned in Manu, but by cohabitation of the Aryan settlers with the aborigines.

Brahmanical civilisation before the caste system of the Middle Land was firmly fixed.

[22] The conflict of Parasu-Rama with the Kshatryas, and his final triumph over them. Müller compares this war of the castes to the long struggle in Greece which ended in the erection of republics upon the ruins of despotism.

[23] The Yavanas and Pahlavas. The Vishnu Purana takes the same view.

As Manu's artificial classification of the people never passed in its integrity beyond the Middle Land to the north, west, or south, so on the east, where Lower Bengal begins, there caste as a fourfold classification ceases. In North Bahar, which borders on the ancient Middle Land, it is just apparent.[24] In South Bahar, which adjoins Lower Bengal, it is unknown; and the population are divided, not into the four castes of Manu, but into Aryans, non-Aryans, and mixed classes.

One important difference, however, is observable in the caste to which the Aryans on the east and those on the west of the Middle Land claim to belong. At the period when the race passed the Indus it was a confederacy of fighting tribes, and among the colonies it left on the west of that river war long continued to be the chief business of life. When, therefore, the Brahmans of the Middle Land formed their fourfold classification, the Western Rajputs and the other tribes of the ancient Bahika land were naturally set down as clans of the military caste. In the Holy Land, where the race pitched its tents after leaving the Indus, and still more in the Land of the Sacred Singers, peace developed literature, and mental attainments rather than physical or warlike qualifications became the

[24] Kshatryas exist in Bahar, but they always give a distinct account of themselves as migrating in small bodies from the north, in comparatively recent times. For an example, see 'The History, Antiquities, etc., of Eastern India,' from the Buchanan MSS., vol. ii. p. 121. The Kshatryas of Bahar claim to be of greater antiquity than any of the isolated families in Lower Bengal.

fountain of honour.[25] The 'religious conceptions and sacred usages which,' to quote a noble sentence of Roth's, 'even in the hymns of the Rig Veda we can see advancing from a simple and unconnected form to compact and multiform shapes, had now spread themselves over the entire life of the people, and in the hands of the priests had become a power predominant over everything else.' At the time when the subsequent Aryan emigrants started for Lower Bengal, the priestly class had been recognised as the head of society, but no sharp distinctions among the general mass of the people seem to have been formed. The settlers in Lower Bengal naturally set up as Aryans of the highest class in their new homes, just as every Englishman in India during the last century claimed for himself the title of Esquire.[26] The Aryans were the aristocracy of Lower Bengal, the Brahmans were the aristocracy of the Middle Land; and when a rigid division of the people took place in the parent country, the aristocracy of the distant province claimed the same rank and the same title as the aristocracy of the fatherland. This rank was never

[25] 'It is only after the Aryan tribes had advanced southward, and taken quiet possession of the rich plains and beautiful groves of Central India, that they seem to have turned all their energies and thoughts from the world without them to that more wonderful nature which they perceived within.'—Max Müller's History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, 8vo, London 1859, p. 25.

[26] Witness 'The Humble Petition of Mr. ——' in the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 15th January 1789. I have seen an advertisement in an early Calcutta paper, in which a military man notifies that he disclaims the title of Esquire.

centuries afterwards, Ballal Sen, the last Hindu sovereign of Bengal, found it necessary to settle questions of precedence by a comprehensive classification of his Aryan subjects. Many of the older families of the province were amalgamated with the new-comers. Almost all of pure Aryan descent were admitted to equal rights, and of the ancient settlers very few recognised descendants now preserve their identity.[27] Several mixed castes were derived from the followers of the Canouj Brahmans (such as the Cayasths); but of the other two Twice-Born castes, as described by Manu, viz. the Kshatryan and the Vaisya, scarcely a single family exists in the southern valley, which cannot trace its origin to the north within comparatively recent times, and the rigid fourfold classification of society laid down by Manu is practically unknown in Lower Bengal.

I am aware that this conclusion is capable of being misunderstood, and likely to be mis-stated. The actual condition of society, with its cruel distinctions, will be cited against me. Jagganath, Gya, nay, the Holy City within the district of Beerbhoom itself, will be enumerated as abiding testimonies to the thoroughgoing character of Hinduism in Lower Bengal. The superstitions of those celebrated shrines, however, are easily accounted for by the strong reaction in favour of Hinduism

[27] This account is abbreviated from the statements of my pandits, and from reports of professional Hindu genealogists. See also Colebrooke's Examinations of the Indian Classes, As. Res. vol. v., and Essays, vol. ii. pp. 187-90, 8vo, 1837.

after the expulsion of Buddhism only eight centuries ago. The social distinctions, more cruel in Lower Bengal perhaps than in any other part of India, proceed from a different cause.

The Sanskrit-speaking settlers found the land already peopled. Their predecessors are still an ethnological mystery, and except in a few frontier districts like Beerbhoom, they succumbed so completely beneath the new-comers, that their separate existence has been forgotten for more than a thousand years by the composite people which they helped to form. As countless species of animals once covered the earth's surface which have left no type in the zoology of the present day, so vast races of the human family have lived and worked out their civilisation and vanished, with regard to whom history has up to the present been mute. Geologers tell us that, in a primeval age, myriads of gigantic birds, of which no representative remains, left their footprints in the sands of Connecticut; that they waded in boundless shallows now dried up into solid stone, feeding upon mail-covered fishes, which now lie side by side with them in the rock, and preyed upon by monsters still larger than themselves, but equally extinct before man was born. The primitive races of India resemble in many ways these birds of the Lias. Like them, they perished in prehistoric times; and of many of them, all that can with certainty be said is, that they once were and now are not. Philology, which speaks so clearly with regard to other extinct

races, has hitherto had nothing definite to say respecting them. To this day they remain an unclaimed, ignoble horde, of whose origin we know nothing, with whom not one of the great races will acknowledge relationship, and who occupy the background of Indian history as the jungle once covered the land, only to prepare the soil for higher forms of life.[28]

The conflict with the children of the soil is the first historical fact related in Sanskrit literature. The passions it excited intrude themselves alike in the hymns of the priest, the maxims of the lawgiver, and the legends of the epic poet. Many of the Vedic chants, like some of the Psalms of David, were poured forth as prayers for deliverance, or as thanksgivings for victory. They describe the enemy in the strong, telling words which men use in moments of excitement; and in judging of the aborigines from the delineations of Sanskrit writers, we must remember that the picture is by an unfriendly hand. After the actual struggle was over, and the beaten races had fallen back into the forest, another element came into play still further to distort the Aryan accounts of them. They shared the fate of the children of Rephaim[29] in Semitic history,

28. Lassen barely refrains from denying their existence.

29 The giant aborigines of Palestine, 'who belonged so entirely to the dim distance, that their name "Rephaim" was used in after-times to designate the huge "guardians," or the shadowy ghosts of the world below.'—Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church, by Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D.D., 8vo, London 1863, p. 208. Cf. also the Shepherd Tribes of Egypt (Milman's History of the Jews, vol. i.), and the Typhonians, or subjects of the Eastern Pharaohs who

and became the demons and fallen angels of Sanskrit literature.[30]

The population of Lower Bengal ethnically consists, therefore, of two elements: first, the Aryan invaders, almost all of whom assumed the rank of Brahmans; second, the aborigines whom these invaders found living in the land, and whom they speedily reduced to the alternative of serfdom on the open country or flight into the jungle. The great gulf between the conquerors and the conquered has never been bridged; and the social distinctions that disgrace Hindu society are not distinctions between various ranks of the same people, but distinctions between too widely diverse and long hostile races. Manu's fourfold classification, which we have seen is strictly predicable only of the Sanskrit Centre or Middle Land, is based upon a twofold classification applicable to Lower Bengal and every other part of India—to wit, the Aryan, or Twice-Born, as Manu calls them, and the non-Aryan tribes. Kshatryas and Vaisyas are to be found in

opposed Mencheres, but in Greek literature are associated with the Hellenic giant and demon Typhon.—Osburne's Monumental History of Egypt, vol. i. p. 350, 8vo, 1854.

[30] The Rakhshasas, from whose power the ancient sacrifice implored the protection of the Sanskrit gods, and who are represented in the person of Ravana (*i.e.* Rakhshasendra) and his imps at Bengali theatricals to this day. The aborigines of Ceylon had the same opprobrious name affixed to them, as Chinese travellers and Cingalese chroniclers attest. Sir Emerson Tennent writes the word as 'Yakko,' evidently the same as 'Rakko,' which is the colloquial form of the Sanskrit Rakhshas.—Mahawanso, cap. vii. Rajavali, p. 172; quoted in a note to Sir Emerson Tennent's Ceylon, vol. i. 332; cf. also 328, 370, etc., third edition.

large numbers only within a limited circle; but the Brahman and the Sudra, with the mixed classes that sprang from them, form the unalterable elements of the whole Hindu population throughout India.

How these ethnical distinctions became embittered, it is not difficult to understand. The superiority on the side of the Aryans was so great, that they looked upon the aborigines as lower animals,[31] in the same way as the Beerbhoom Brahman of the present day who goes to settle in the adjoining Santal highlands despises, and until recently enslaved, the humble tribes he finds there. In every point in which two races can be compared, the aborigines, called in early Sanskrit literature Dasyans,[32] were painfully inferior. Their speech was of a broken, imperfect type. The Aryan warrior used to pray for victory over 'the men of the inarticulate utterance'[33] and 'of the uncouth talk.'[34] From the lips of the Aryan flowed a language instinct with tenderness and power; a

31 They appear in the great epic under the name of the Monkey Tribes; in the Himalayas and Ceylon as the Snakes (Nagas), in which form they may also be seen at Hindu theatricals of the present day. They come upon the stage dressed up as the demon inhabitants of the lower regions (Patala), with human faces, a serpent's tail, and sometimes with broad hoods representing the expanded neck of the Cobra (Coluber Naga).

32 The word appears as Dasyu and Dasa. The latter survives, unchanged, as a family name among the Hinduized aborigines at this day, and is popularly spelt Doss.

33 Mridhravach. But cf. Böhtlingk and Roth.

34 Anasa, Mlechha. Of these words diverse interpretations have been brought forward. The rendering above given has ample authority on its side, and after Professor Goldstucker's criticisms this is as much as can be said of many Vedic epithets.

language equipped with the richest inflections and a whole phalanx of grammatical forms; one which clearly uttered whatever it was in man's lot to suffer, and whatever it was in his mind to conceive, and which from the beginning of recorded time stands forth in one form or other as the vehicle of his highest intellectual efforts. It is not difficult to understand the contempt with which the Sanskrit-speaking conquerors regarded a speech squeezed into such narrow and so ignobly objective moulds as that of the ancient Dasyans or their descendants, the present hill-tribes of the northern frontier. Of this language the most striking features are its multitude of words for whatever can be seen or handled, and its absolute inability to express reflex conceptions of the intellect;[35] the absence of terms representing relationship in general, and conspicuously the relationship of cause and effect;[36] its meagreness in giving utterance to the emotions, those higher forms of consciousness in which passion is happily blended with reflection; and its total barrenness of any expressions to shadow forth the mystery of man's inward life;[37]—a language of

[35] In Kocch, Bodo, and Dhimal, there is not a single vernacular word to express matter, spirit, space, instinct, reason, consciousness, quantity, degree, or the like.—Essay on the Kocch, Bodo, and Dhimal Tribes, by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., late of the Bengal Civil Service. Vocabulary, p. 11 et seq.

[36] In Bodo and Dhimal, cause and effect cannot be expressed at all, and in Kocch only by words borrowed direct from Sanskrit.—*Id.* p. 13.

[37] Nor have the above languages any terms for earth, heaven, hell, this world, or the next. The Dhimal-speaking tribes have adopted pure Sanskrit words to express these ideas. The Bodos

sensation rather than of perception; of the seen rather than of the unseen; of the present rather than of the future and the past.

Perhaps the circumstance which more than any other single cause tended to widen the gulf between the races, was their difference in colour.[38] The invaders came of a northern stock, and deeply felt that repugnance which the white man everywhere entertains to the black. The ancient singer praises the god who 'destroyed the Dasyans and protected the *Aryan colour*;'[39] and 'the thunderer who bestowed on his *white friends* the fields, bestowed the sun, bestowed the waters.'[40] Whatever obscurity may attach to the latter passage, there can be no doubt of the abhorrence with which the singers speak again and again of 'the black skin.'[41] They tell us of the 'stormy gods who rush on like furious bulls and scatter the black skin;' and of 'the black skin, the hated of Indra,' being swept out of heaven.[42] 'Indra,' runs another text, 'protected in battle the Aryan worshipper, he subdued the lawless for Manu, he conquered the black skin,'[43] and the sacrificer poured out thanks to his

have a word for the visible arch of the sky, but beyond it their imagination does not rise.

[38] Muir's Original Sanskrit Texts, part i. p. 43; part ii. p. 284, p. 323, etc. The following Vedic quotations are taken direct from the Texts, as I have not at present the means of referring to the hymns.

[39] Rig Veda, iii. 34, 9.

[40] *Id.* i. 100, 18.

[41] 'Krishnam twacham,' Rig Veda, ix. 41, 1, etc.; an epithet which reappears, says Muir, in the Sama Veda, i. 491, and ii. 242.

[42] Rig Veda, ix. 73, 5.

[43] *Id.* i. 130, 8.

god for 'scattering the slave bands of black descent,' and for stamping out 'the vile Dasyan colour.'[44]

A third source of detestation on the part of the Aryan for the aborigines was their repulsive habits of eating. They respected not the life of animals; some of them ate horse-flesh; others human flesh; others, again, fed on the uncooked carcase; and all made use of animal food to a degree which shocked the nicer sensibilities of the Aryan. The Vedic singers speak of them as gross, gluttonous savages, and concentrate the national abhorrence into one stinging epithet—'The Raw-Eaters.'[45]

Another source of deep and abiding aversion was the paganism of the Dasyans. The Aryan brought with him highly developed beliefs, and a stately array of religious rites.[46] He found himself among a people without any intelligible faith, and in bondage to the basest fears. The two noblest doctrines of pre-Christian religion—the unity of God and the immortality of the soul—appear in the earliest Sanskrit writings, and have never for a moment, amid centuries of defeat and political degradation, been wholly lost sight of by the Sanskrit-speaking

[44] Rig Veda, ii. 20, 7, and ii. 12, 4. The 'Dasam Varnam adharam' of the latter verse is still in the mouths of many pandits who never had a copy of the Veda in their hands.

[45] 'Amad.' For a variety of phrases indicating this repugnance, see Original Sanskrit Texts, part ii. 435.

[46] Those who wish to realize how deeply the early Indian thinkers penetrated the problems of modern ethics, may compare the beautiful Hindu belief, that whatever we love is loved not for itself, but as the dwelling-place of the First Self, with Jonathan Edwards' 'Theory of Degrees of Being.'

race. The truth has been debased and overlaid with error, but the truth has always remained. At a very early period they fell into a mistake natural to an imaginative people, and, by recognising the Almighty too vividly in His more solemn manifestations, became practically polytheists, worshipping the work more than the Worker, the creature rather than the Creator. But an intellectual recognition of the unity of the Deity appears equally amid the supplications to gods many in the Veda, and the multitudinous superstitions of more recent Hinduism. The ancient Aryans' 'highest object of religion was to restore that bond by which their own self was linked to the Eternal Self:'[47] and the modern pandit's reply to the missionary who accuses him of polytheism is: 'Oh, these are only various manifestations of the one God; the same as, though the sun be one in the heavens, yet he appears in multiform reflections upon the lake. The various sects are only different entrances to the one city.'[48]

47 Müller's History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 19. Dr. Muir, in part iv. of his Texts, shows how each of the great sects worships his own deity as the one supreme god. 'Glory to thee,' prays the Krishna-worshipper, 'thou maker of all, thou soul of all, thou source of all, Vishnu, Conqueror, Hari, Krishna.' Then follows a list of the various names under which he is implored.—Sanskrit Texts, iv. p. 223.

48 This answer is mentioned by Mr. Long in his pamphlet entitled Notes on Visits to Pandits, p. 1, 8vo, Calcutta. I have more than once received the same reply. For a philosophical description of the multiplication of gods, see Whately's Dissertation, Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. i. p. 465, eighth edition: 'And it would often happen that one set of men would venerate one image, and others

The aborigines, so far from having a distinct conception of the unity of God, seemed to the Aryan to possess no conception of a God at all. Their highest religious emotion was vague dread; and four Vedic epithets, with others equally full of detestation, depict them as the 'Rejectors of Indra,' 'not sacrificing,' 'without gods,' and 'without rites.'[49]

With regard to another point—a point which forms the theological differentia of man as contrasted with the beasts that perish—the invaders had been vouchsafed a peculiarly full illumination, while the aborigines remained buried in primeval night. The Aryans possessed an unwavering assurance of a future life. The lonely journey of the soul after its separation from the body formed, indeed, one of the first mysteries with which their national mind had grappled, and, like all the imaginative races of antiquity, they devised a being more divine than man, though originally not equal to the gods, to guide them on the dark passage. While the Egyptian monarch lay wrapped in essences beneath the pyramid, Theut conducted his soul to the judgment of the dead. Hermes performed the same office for the Greeks, and the Romans placed the *caduceus*

another somewhat different, though originally designed to represent the same being. And there would also be some difference in the kind of worship paid to each of these images, and in the tales related concerning it, so that by degrees some of them would come to be considered as so many distinct gods.'

[49] 'Anindra,' 'Ayajyu,' 'Adeva,' 'Avrata.' That these epithets were not applicable to all the aboriginal tribes, will appear in the next chapter. In some places they probably refer to Aryan schismatics.

in the hand of Mercury. Azrail, under various names, has guided the Semitic tribes of all ages and creeds to one ultimate neutral ground. Yama was the Nekropompos of the Aryan race. The earlier form of his story is preserved on the Persian side of the Himalayas. Yima, runs the Zend legend, was a monarch in that primitive time when sorrow, sickness, and death were unknown. By degrees sin and disease crept into the world, the slow necessity of death hastened its step, and the old king retired with a chosen band from the polluted earth into a kingdom where he still reigns. The Sanskrit version belongs to a later and more subjective period. According to it, Yama was the first man who passed through death into immortality. Having discovered the way to the other world, he obtained for himself a kingdom in it, and the tenth book of the Rig Veda represents him as guiding other men thither. In one verse he is seen feasting under a leafy tree;[50] in others, as enthroned in the innermost heaven, and granting luminous abodes to the pious.[51] Meanwhile his two brown dogs, 'broad of nostril and of a hunger never to be satisfied, wander among men,'[52] or, like Cerberus, guard the avenue to his palace along which the departed are exhorted to hurry with all possible speed. 'Reverence to Yama, who is death; to him who first reached the river, spying out a road for

50 Rig Veda, x. 135, 1. Atharva Veda, xviii. 4, 3.

51 Rig Veda, ix. 113, 7, 8. *Id.* x. 14, 8, 9, and 10.

52 Rig Veda, x. 14, 11, and 12. The dogs are elsewhere called black and spotted. Atharva Veda, viii. 1, 9.

many; who is lord of the two-footed and the four-footed creatures.'[53] 'Worship with an offering King Yama, the assembler of men, who departed to the mighty waters, who spied out a road for many.'[54]

Incremation suggested itself to the devout Aryan as the most solemn method for severing the mortal from the immortal part of the dead. His faith, like our own, taught him to look upon death as a new birth rather than as the annihilation of being; and for him the fire performed the office of a liberator, not of a destroyer. As a man derived his natural birth from his parents, and a partial regeneration, or second birth, by the performance of his religious duties; so the fire, by setting free the spiritual element from the superincumbent clay, completed the third or heavenly birth. His friends stood round the pyre as round a natal bed, and commanded his eye to go to the sun, his breath to the wind, his limbs to the earth, the water and the plants whence they had been derived. But 'as for his unborn part, do thou, Lord (Agni), quicken it with thy heat; let thy flame and thy brightness kindle it; convey it to the world of the righteous.'[55]

Thirteen years ago, Professor Müller published an essay on the Funeral Rites of the Brahmans, in which

[53] Atharva Veda, vi. 28, 3. But cf. Max. Müller's Lectures, 2d Series, p. 515.

[54] Rig Veda, x. 14, 1. Those who would pursue the subject further, may do so with great facility in Dr Muir's 'Yama', Journal R. A. S., part ii., 1865, whence the above quotations and those immediately following are derived.

[55] Funeral hymn to Agni, to be chanted while the body was being burned.

he cites a sort of liturgy with which the Aryan used to bid farewell to his friend while the body lay upon the pyre. 'Depart thou, depart thou by the ancient paths to the place whither our fathers have departed. Meet with the ancient ones;[56] meet with the Lord of Death; obtain thy desires in heaven. Throwing off thine imperfections, go to thy home. Become united with a body; clothe thyself in a shining form. Go ye; depart ye; hasten ye from hence.'[57] The responses might then fitly come in: 'Let him depart to those for whom flow the rivers of nectar. Let him depart to those who through meditation have obtained the victory, who by fixing their thoughts on the unseen have gone to heaven. . . . Let him depart to the mighty in battle, to the heroes who have laid down their lives for others, to those who have bestowed their goods on the poor.'[58] Returning to the direct form of address: 'May sweet breezes blow upon thee. May the water-shedding angels bear thee upwards, cooling thee with their swift motion through the air, and sprinkling thee with dew.' 'May thy soul go to its own, and hasten to the fathers.' The service might fitly conclude with a chorus from the Veda: 'Bear him, carry him; let him, with all his faculties complete, go to the world of the righteous. Crossing the dark valley which spreadeth boundless around him, let the unborn soul ascend to heaven. . . . Wash the feet of him who is stained with sin; let him go upwards with cleansed feet. Crossing the gloom, gazing with

[56] The Pitrs. [57] Rig Veda, x. 14. [58] *Id.* x. 154.

wonder in many directions, let the unborn soul go up to heaven.'[59]

Of the doctrine of transmigration there is not a trace in the earlier Veda. The circle round the pyre sang with the firm assurance that their friend went direct to a state of blessedness and reunion with the loved ones who had gone before 'Do thou conduct us to heaven (O Lord), let us be with our wives and children.'[60] 'In heaven, where our friends dwell in bliss, having left behind the infirmities of the body, free from lameness, free from crookedness of limb, there let us behold our parents and our children.'[61] The wife also is to be united with her husband.[62] 'Place me, O Pure One, in that everlasting and unchanging world, where light and glory are found. Make me immortal in the world in which joys, delights, and happiness abide, where the desires are obtained.'[63] 'Truly,' says Roth, 'we here find, not without astonishment, beautiful conceptions on immortality, expressed in unadorned language with childlike conviction.'

It was only to those, however, who had lived righteously on earth that this bright world was open. The idea of a future state as one of retribution did not receive full development till a later period than that to which the foregoing hymns

59 Atharva Veda, ix. 5, 1. 60 Atharva Veda, xii. 3, 17.

61 Atharva Veda, vi. 120, 3.

62 Colebrooke's Essays, i. 116, etc., 8vo, 1837. Atharva Veda, ix. 5, 27.

63 Address to Soma, the abstract deified form of the libation.—Rig Veda, ix. 113, 7 and 11.

belong; but one of the theological treatises, which had for their object the interpretation of these hymns, contains the following remarkable sentences: 'In the next world they place a man's good and evil deeds in a balance. Which of the two shall turn the scale that he shall follow, whether it be for good or for evil. Now, whosoever knows this, places himself in the balance in this world, and is freed from being weighed in the next.'

The Vedic texts cited in the foregoing pages evince a faith in immortality infinitely firmer than anything to be found either in Semitic writings,[64] or in the subsequent Aryan literature of Greece and Rome. The Veda represents the departed soul as taking a tangible but more glorious body, and as living in blessed reunion with former friends and kinsmen. Homer's world is a dim uncertain region, peopled with shadows—mostly unhappy ones; a world so repugnant to our inborn love of life and sunshine, that Achilles tells Ulysses he would rather be a servant upon earth than reign over all the departed. In the decline of paganism, the philosophers of the court of Julian, reading Plato by the light of St. Paul, could find much that was consoling to mortality in his pages. But we have the amplest evidence that the uninspired philosophy of Greece and Rome afforded no certain hope of immortality to its most accomplished disciples. 'We are sufficiently acquainted,' writes Gibbon,

64 Even the Jewish Bible fails to inculcate a future life as an inducement to virtuous conduct in the present one.

'with the eminent persons who flourished in the age of Cicero and of the first Cæsars—with their actions, their characters, their motives—to rest assured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any serious conviction of the rewards or punishments of a future state.' The Tusculan Disputations found their argument for a state of eternal bliss on a false dilemma, and what Cicero professes to revere in the Grove, he scoffs at in the Forum. We rise from the dream of Scipio, or from the arguments by which the philosophic pagan obtains the consoling assurance that death is but a change of life, and turning to a speech by Cicero on behalf of a friend[65] on trial for a capital crime, we find that a future life is a matter for recluses to amuse themselves with, but which no man of the world would allow to regulate his ordinary actions.

The question is a deeply interesting one. How comes it that these old singers in Northern India had clearer and more profound conceptions of man's destiny than the philosophers of Greece and Rome? How was it that the child knew more than the man, and that the light of nature waxed dimmer and dimmer, till it altogether disappeared? Were the strong simple beliefs of the earlier time echoes of those lessons which Adam listened to in the cool of the day—if modern research would still permit us to accept the beautiful Hebrew story—echoes which, according to old, if fond, opinion, floated down fainter and more faint to generations of

[65] Pro Cluentio.

prehistoric man, till they died away amid the clang of contending schools, and the arrogance of unaided reason? This view interferes not with any sound theology. 'In the career of Balaam,' says Dr. Stanley, 'is seen that recognition of divine inspiration outside the chosen people, which the narrowness of modern times has been so eager to deny, but which the Scriptures are always ready to acknowledge, and, by acknowledging, admit within the pale of the universal church the higher spirits of every age and of every nation.'[66]

In humiliating contrast with the Aryans' assurance of immortality are the words with which the aboriginal tribes of the northern frontier dismiss their dead from this world. Of eternity they have not the slightest conception; in some of their languages the longest period of time that can be expressed is the duration of a man's life, and in one aboriginal tongue the highest number is seven.[67] The great object of these aborigines is to get their dead out of their sight. The north-eastern hill-men hide the corpse in a hole as soon as the breath has left it. No stately rites are observed. The kinsmen wash themselves at the nearest stream, and return to their usual work immediately after the interment. Among the tribes that have developed funeral ceremonies, a burial is only an occasion for

[66] Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church, p. 190. Whately also concedes a true inspiration to Balaam.—Dissertation on the Rise, Progress, and Corruptions of Christianity.

[67] Bodo language.—Essay on the Kocch, Bodo, and Dhimal Tribes, by B. H. Hodgson, p. 117. 8vo. Calcutta, 1847.

gluttony and drunkenness. When the feast is got ready, they repair to the newly made grave, and, presenting food and drink to the dead, bid farewell in the following sentences : 'Take and eat. Heretofore you have eaten and drunken with us; you can do so no more. You were one of us; you can be so no longer. We come no more to you; come you not to us.'[68] The parting is a final one. The Aryan requiem looked forward to reunion above; that of the aboriginal tribes shrinks from the dead as from an undefined horror, and, so far from speaking of a meeting hereafter, begs that they may be spared the terrors of a visit.

I have dwelt at length on the unequal degree of enlightenment possessed by the Aryan and aboriginal races, because I believe that it affords the true explanation of those cruel social distinctions which divide the existing population of India. The Dasyan appears in Sanskrit history first as an enemy, then as an evil spirit, then as a lower animal, and finally as the slave of the nobler race.[69] The difference was infinitely greater than that between

[68] Essay on the Kocch, Bodo, and Dhimal Tribes, p. 180. The southern aborigines exhibit a higher class of funeral rites.

[69] The monkey owes the respect with which the Hindus regard him to the friendly reception that some of the aboriginal nations (the so-called Monkey tribes) gave to the Aryan immigrants who afterwards enslaved them. Signor Gorresio has fully discussed the subject of the Monkey Races, in his 'Dissertations on and Notes to the Ramayana.' The gradations of the aborigines—as (1) enemies, (2) demons, (3) lower animals, (4) slaves of the Aryans in Ceylon —are well marked.—Mahawanso, chap. xxxvii. Rajavali, p. 237. Rajarat-nacari, p. 69. Referred to in Tennent's Ceylon, i. 370, etc., note, 3d edition.

the composite parts of other nations of antiquity; so also was the contempt of the superior for the inferior people. This contempt has left its mark on every page of Sanskrit literature, and we can imagine the haughty Prakrit-speaking lord regarding his bondsman's broken utterances — his *go-ho* (man), *go-ḍum* (leg), *po-ta* (belly)[70] — not with the placid contempt of the Patrician for the Plebs, or even with the deeper disdain of the Hellene for his Helot, but rather with the hatred and loathing of Swift's Houyhnhnms for the sputterings of their Yahoos.

Nevertheless, two races cannot live for ages together without each affecting the other. The superior may force the inferior into its own moulds, but it cannot help being itself influenced in turn; and the aboriginal tribes have done much to alter the language, religion, and political destiny of their conquerors. The influence of the aboriginal element made itself felt at a very early period in the Apabhransa or vernacular form of Sanskrit used by the low castes. It is termed 'a provincial jargon' by Donaldson, following Colebrooke, and has been elaborately discussed by Dr. Muir.[71] The vernacular language of India is divided by native grammarians into two parts, one derived from Sanskrit, the other from the aboriginal tongues. In Bengal the aboriginal element is called the Bhasha; in the

70 A valuable list of aboriginal words will be found in the Sanskrit Texts, vol ii. p. 36 et seq.

71 As. Res. vol. vii. reprint. New Cratylus, p. 85, 8vo, 1839. Sanskrit Texts, part ii. chap. i.

south of India it passes by various names, such as Atsu-Telugu, or more generally Desya. The patois of Lower Bengal, particularly as spoken by the common people in Beerbhoom and other districts on the ethnographical frontier, is full of words not to be derived from Sanskrit; and although such words are carefully excluded from written Bengali, they are ever in the mouths of the husbandman, the herdsman, and the forester, and they have furnished the domestic language of affection in which the mother speaks to her child. In religion, the Aryans of the Lower Valley have unquestionably borrowed much of their demon-worship from the aborigines, and of that anxiety to propitiate the malignant rather than serve the beneficent deities, which now forms so marked and so degrading a feature of Hindu superstition. Indeed, I shall afterwards show that the Sivites—a sect which during the past six centuries has drawn within itself the great majority of the Indian people—derived its object of worship from the aboriginal tribes. Whatever mythology Siva or Rudra may originally have belonged to, there can be no doubt that Siva-worship, as performed in Lower Bengal, is the reverse of the Aryan spirit of devotion, and represents the superstition of the black races. Signor Gorresio points out how in the old times the chief object of adoration among the aborigines was this terrible deity, whom they appeased with human blood. The first aim of the British Government on acquiring a province has always been to put

down such sacrifices; but in seasons of scarcity, the priests of Lower Bengal still offer up children to the insatiable demon who terrified the forest tribes three thousand years ago.

During 1865–66 such sacrifices were had recourse to in order to avert the famine. They were few in number, the police being specially on the alert, and the authorities having got warning by the publicity which the press gave to the two cases that were brought to light. The following are the details of a human sacrifice in 1866 in the Jessore district, one of the oldest settled and most enlightened parts of Bengal: 'A Mahommedan boy about seven years of age was found in the scaffold-room adjoining a temple of Kali (the wife of Siva), at Luckipassa, with his neck in the *harcat*, or wooden scaffold, and his neck cut. The tongue was fixed between the teeth, the eyes open, clotted blood on his body, which was quite exposed, and two cuts of a *khundah* were visible on the neck. The sacrifice, it seems, was not completed, for the object is entirely to sever the head from the body. In a late case at Hooghly, the head was left before the idol decked with flowers.'[72] Among the aboriginal tribes to the south-west of Beerbhoom I heard vague reports of human sacrifices in the forests, with a view to procuring the early arrival of the rains.

The same proneness to demon-worship and deprecatory rites exhibits itself in every part of India, and always with a force in proportion to the

[72] *The Englishman* of the 19th May 1866. Calcutta.

strength of the aboriginal element in the local population. In Northern India, throughout the whole Middle Land of Manu, the aborigines completely succumbed beneath the Aryans, and demon-worship hardly appears. In Lower Bengal, where the Aryan element did not wholly overpower the aboriginal, demon-worship in a mitigated shape forms part of the popular rites; among the forest tribes of the central table-land, where the Aryans never settled, it is the only religion known; and in Ceylon, where they settled in comparatively small numbers, it lies at the root of the whole rural worship. The strictest of the Hindu kings of Ceylon found himself compelled to support the village devil-dancers at the public cost. Buddhism overpowered Hinduism, but it wholly failed to put down, and at length was fain to connive at demon-worship; the Portuguese and Dutch clergy could convert the people from Buddhism, but lament their inability to weaken the tenacity of the Cinghalese to devil-sacrifices; and Wesleyan and Baptist missionaries in Ceylon, while able to make Protestants of Roman Catholics, cannot purify their most promising catechumens of these aboriginal superstitions.[73]

A more pleasing subject is the worship of the village and household gods in Lower Bengal—a harmless superstition which the Hindus have unmistakeably derived from the aboriginal tribes. How this worship is carried on by the hill-races, I shall

[73] Sir Emerson Tennent's Ceylon, i. 542, 3d edition.

afterwards describe. On the plains, the village god has ever been an object of veneration with the low castes of mixed descent, rather than of the Brahmans, and in many places the worship has altogether died out among the higher ranks. At the beginning of this century, however, Buchanan found it existing everywhere throughout the north-western districts of Lower Bengal. 'The vulgar,' he says, 'have never been entirely able to abandon the worship of the village deities, and imitate their ancestors either by making such offerings as before mentioned (betel, red lead, rice, water) to an anonymous deity, under whose protection they suppose their village to be, or call by that name various ghosts that have become objects of worship, or various of the Hindu Devatas. The ghosts, in fact, and the others called village deities, seem to be the gods most usually applied to in cases of danger by all ranks, and their favour is courted with bloody sacrifices and other offerings. They are not in general represented by images, nor have they temples; but the deity is represented by a lump of clay, sometimes placed under a tree, and provided with a priest of some low tribe,'[74] *i.e.* sprung from the aboriginal element in the population. Several of these village gods are older than the Aryan settlement, being deified personages sprung from the aboriginal tribes, whose distinctive nationality has been forgotten for ages in the districts where their representative men are

[74] History, etc., of Eastern India, from the Buchanan MSS., vol. i. p. 190.

still worshipped. Everywhere the ceremonies bear the stamp of the old superstitious terrors, and the carnivorous, gluttonous habits of the black races. Indeed, Buchanan well describes them as 'sacrifices made partly from fear, and partly to gratify the appetite for flesh.'[75] The fierce aboriginal instincts, even in the mixed castes, who approach nearest to the Aryans, and accept in a greater degree than their neighbours the restraints of Hinduism, break loose on such festivals; and cowherds have been seen to feed voraciously on swine-flesh, which at all other times they regard with abhorrence. In Beerbhoom, particularly in the western border-land, this worship is very popular, and once a-year the whole capital repairs to a shrine in the jungle, and there makes simple offerings to a ghost who dwells in a Bela-tree.[76] In spite of the tree being, at the most, seventy years old, the common people claim the greatest antiquity for the shrine; and tradition says, that the three trees which now mark the spot neither grow thicker nor increase in height, but remain the same for ever. As in all ceremonies which partake of the aboriginal worship, blood is

[75] History, etc., of Eastern India, from the Buchanan MSS., vol. i. p. 194.

[76] The shrine is situated far in the jungle between Pattra village and Nagri, some distance past Buttaspore. It consists of three trees: a Bela tree on the left, in which the ghost resides, and which is marked at the foot with blood; in the middle is a Kachmula tree, and on the right a Saura tree. Devotees throw down their offerings of earth, rice, and money before the trees, while a priest stands ready to strike off at a single blow the heads of such victims as are presented, returning the body with his blessing to the offerer.

copiously poured forth, and the day ends with a feast upon the victims. The very offerings bear witness to the primitive state of the tribes among whom the superstition took its rise. Only the rich sacrifice goats, the ordinary oblation being a handful of earth thrown down before the divinity, with a few grains of rice or a copper coin from those who can afford it.

The difference between the worship of the aboriginal Siva and of the village deities is, that the former has been adopted by the Brahmans or Hindus of pure Aryan descent, while the latter have remained in the hands of the mixed mass of the population. Yet, in ancient times, Siva-worship, now universal throughout the whole lower valley of the Ganges, seems to have been as unpopular with the Brahmans as the simple village divinities now are; while even the most despised of these latter relics of antiquity at the present day finds some needy priest of the sacred class to officiate at its shrine. Siva is not, indeed, the only aboriginal deity who has risen to distinction among the mixed people of Bengal;[77] but he happened to resemble in many particulars a Sanskrit divinity with whom he became identified, and whose name he now bears. It is curious to notice that Siva-worship, like demon-worship and the adoration of the village gods, has a hold on the people always in proportion to the

[77] Buchanan speaks of a village god of quite modern origin, Malik Baya by name, who was universally worshipped in Bahar and the adjoining countries. Many others might be mentioned.

strength of the aboriginal element. His great shrines are among the hills which separate the aboriginal from the Aryan races, or on some other frontier of Sanskrit civilisation. The scenes of his adventures are placed among the Himalayas, and thousands of pilgrims travel every year to his altars in the highlands of Beerbhoom. As Professor Wilson justly remarks, Siva-worship has ever been one of mystery; a worship bare of the charming legends which grew up so luxuriantly around the objects of adoration of the more cultivated race, and one whose sole visible representation is a rude emblem.[78] Yet Siva-worship is the only form of religion which has now any hold on the masses in the Lower Valley. Krishna or Vishnu is the god of the higher castes, and his worship is looked upon as a spectacle or entertainment rather than as a serious office of religion. In all time of need it is on Siva —a deity scarcely known to the earliest Aryan writers—that the Bengali populace calls.

I hope that my desire fully to bring out the effect of the aboriginal superstitions on the religion of the Hindus has not led me to overstate the truth. The impossibility of applying the Aryan faith, as represented in classical literature, to the existing religion of Lower Bengal, first attracted my attention to the subject. Conversations with learned Brahmans suggested that the wide differ-

[78] Essays and Lectures on the Religion of the Hindus, by H. H. Wilson. Collected Works, i. 189, Trübner, 1862. The origin of Siva-worship will be minutely discussed in the following chapter.

ence between their own doctrines, even when most orthodox, and the popular beliefs of Hinduism, was a difference not only in degree, but in kind,—a difference not of education, but of race. In this difference lies the explanation of the esoteric and the exoteric religions of the Hindus; the former representing the faith which the Aryan settlers transmitted to their children of pure descent, the latter the patchwork of superstitions which the mixed population derived from the black-skinned, human-sacrificing, flesh-eating forest tribes. The widespread corruption of Aryan faith which followed, according to Sanskrit authors, immediately on the mingling of the two races and the consequent growth of mixed castes,[79] affords strong corroborative proof of this view; and the religion of the inferior Eurasians, sprung indiscriminately from Portuguese, Dutch, French, English, Hindu, and Mussulman parents, is as degrading, if not so idolatrous, as that of the mixed castes of ancient India. But what eventually led me to diverge so widely from the commonly received view was a three years' residence on the border-land between the Hindus and the aborigines. The population of the hills and of the plains glide into one another, carrying with them their respective customs, beliefs, and superstitions. From the black squat tribes who inhabit the tops of the mountains, to the tall olive-coloured Brahman of the capital of Beerbhoom, with his intellectual brow, calm eyes,

[79] Known to English readers as the 'Burrun Sunker.'—Halhed's Gentoo Code, Preface, p. 103, 8vo, 1781.

and high but narrow head, there are a hundred imperceptible gradations through the aborigines of the slopes and the low castes of the valleys.[80] So, too, with their religion. It is easy to point out superstitions which in some parts are considered as purely aboriginal, and which the Brahmans regard with all the aversion that the Levites entertained toward the abominations of the Canaanites, but which in other districts hold a position more than half-way between the two religions. This is particularly noticeable in the worship of the village deities. Where the population is entirely aboriginal, such rites are held to be purely aboriginal, and no respectable Brahman would pollute himself by officiating at them. Where the population is mixed, and the semi-Aryan masses worship the old village or forest deities, the worship is deemed half Hindu, and some necessitous priest is found to undertake the office. In still more perfectly Hinduized districts, a little fraternity of Brahmans may be found attached to each favourite village god, and in some places such deities form the popular worship of the whole Hindu people. From the ghost-worship in the Beerbhoom jungle, and the sacrifices to Malik Baya and similar deified personages in Bahar, to the worship of Siva, is only a step; and it is impossible to study the border population without coming to the conclusion, that Siva, now universally adored

80 Bowries, Bagdis, etc., are found both in the hills and on the plains. In the courts of justice it is constantly necessary to ask witnesses belonging to these castes whether they belong to the Hindu or the Santal (*i.e.* aboriginal) families of the same patronymic.

by the Bengali people, with his colleges of priests in every city, his conical shrines on every road-side, and his noble flights of steps at every few miles along the holy river, is only the last and highest link of an uninterrupted chain of superstitions which unites the two races.

Marked as the influence of the aboriginal tribes has been upon the language of Bengal, still more marked and pernicious as their influence has been upon its religion, they have exercised an infinitely more abiding and more baneful effect upon the social condition and the political destiny of the people. It is chiefly to the presence of a heterogeneous population of mixed descent, the Bengalis owe it that they have never been a nation; for two races, the one consisting of masters, the other of slaves, are not easily welded into a single nationality. Concession must precede union, and a people has to make some advance towards being one socially before it can become one politically. During ages the Sanskrit element kept disdainfully aloof from the aboriginal, denying it every civil, political, and religious right. Not to speak of the *jus suffragii*, or the *jus honorum*, the *jus commercii* was granted only under the severest restrictions, and upon the most unfavourable terms, to the servile race. The meanest trades alone were open to it; and while the twice-born tribes retained all the more profitable and honourable branches of industry as their heirlooms, they could at any time set up as rivals to the low castes in the wonted

occupations of the latter, if necessity or convenience urged them so to do. There was one law of inheritance for the Aryan, another for the non-Aryan;[81] and of the humanizing influences by which intermarriage reconciles hostile races they knew nothing. Cohabitation between the ruling and the servile castes fell in certain cases within the penalties of sacrilege and incest; and to this day the most enlightened Hindu would regard such a union with all the abhorrence that the Romans felt towards the marriage of their emperor with the German princess who, though according to international equity the wife, has come down in history as the concubine of Gallienus.

For this disdain the Aryans of Lower Bengal have had to pay dearly. It is a bad thing for a race to be able to get other people to do its work during three thousand years. The higher classes of Hindu society, by their inbred dislike and contempt for manual industry, disabled themselves from becoming a wealthy or powerful people, and are at this moment being ousted from many posts of emolument by the despised mixed multitude who have for ages done the work of the country, but who now for the first time are secured by an impartial government in the fruits of their labour. Even in education, the immemorial monopoly of the Brahmans, the competition of the non-Aryan element is beginning to be felt. In the Beerbhoom public school, which stands first of three

[81] Manava-dharma-sastra, ix. 156, 157. 4to, 1825.

hundred educational institutions in the south-west division of Lower Bengal,[82] a man belonging to what used to be considered a very degraded caste is now head-master; and throughout the whole country, thousands of Brahman boys are instructed by teachers whose family names (Dass) proclaim them the descendants of the enslaved aboriginal tribes (Dasyu). Accustomed to look upon toil as a mark of slavery, the Hindus have never worked more than was necessary to supply their wants. Capital, therefore, the surplus of production above consumption, has never existed; and in the absence of capital, any high advance in material civilisation is impossible. Another element of such an advance, co-operation, has been equally unknown. Division of labour, in its literal sense of giving to every man a separate employment, has indeed been carried to its utmost length; but the division of labour, in its economical signification as a method of co-operation, has been rendered impossible by the contempt which divides man from man. On this subject, false appearances, and inaccurate names for these appearances, have led many writers into error. Division of labour, as a term of Political Economy, means a division of processes in order to an ultimate combination of results. Division of labour, as predicable of Indian art or manufacture, means a division of results (each man being able to do only one thing) effected by a combination of processes

[82] Report on Public Instruction. Lower Provinces, 1865-66. Appendix, p. 235.

(each man performing the whole of the processes requisite to produce the single result). The Indo-Aryans have paid a heavy penalty for debasing the humbler children of the soil, by that stagnation and incapability of national advancement which has formed the most conspicuous difference between them and other families of the same noble stock. They refused to share their light with the people who dwelt in darkness, and for ages any further illumination has been denied to themselves.

But this has not been their whole punishment. In the pride of intellect, they condemned a people strong-armed, but of meagre intelligence, to perpetual slavery while living, and refused them admittance to their own bright world when dead. Hence the reticence of the Bengali people, each caste keeping its sympathies for its own members, dreading the classes above it as conquerors or tyrants, and disdaining to admit the classes below it into its confidence. In their turn, the Aryan population of India have been subdued by successive waves of conquerors, inferior to them in their boasted intellect, but able to wield the sword with a more powerful right hand than is given to a people who shift the labour of life on to servile shoulders. Afghan, Tartar, and Mogul, found the Indo-Aryans effeminated by long sloth, divided amongst themselves, and devoid of any spirit of nationality. Thus for seven centuries has Providence humbled the disdainful spirit of Hinduism beneath the heel of barbarian invaders, grinding together all

classes and sects as upon the nether millstone, and slowly bringing on the time foretold in the Sanskrit Book of the Future,[83] when the Indian people shall be of one caste, and form one nation. That this time is now not far off, no one who is acquainted with the Bengalis of the present day will doubt. They have about them the capabilities of a noble people. What they want is social amalgamation, to be effected, not as the Sanskrit prophet predicts, by the universal corruption of the Indian races, but as the Christian devoutly hopes, by their universal regeneration.[84]

Having thus unfolded the terms upon which the Aryan and aboriginal races combined to form the mixed Hindu population of the lowlands, I proceed to examine the condition of the tribes who, among the hills and western fastnesses, have preserved their primitive descent intact.

83 The Bhavishya Purana.

84 Throughout this chapter I have stated my own views without enlarging upon, or sometimes even adverting to, the existence of different opinions. I have done so not from want of respect for the views of others, but because the nature of the work precluded the discussions that such statements would lead to. To take a single instance. Vedic scholars are at variance as to the meaning of Dasyu, some translating it as 'demon,' others understanding it to refer to the aborigines. I have accepted the latter view without comment; and I notice that Max Müller, in his 'Chips,' gives his authority to it. Unfortunately, his admirable volumes did not reach me till this chapter was in type, and I have therefore been unable to make use of or refer to them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ABORIGINAL HILL-MEN OF BEERBHOOM.

'IN every extensive jungly or hilly tract throughout the vast continent of India, there exist hundreds of thousands of human beings in a state not materially different from that of the Germans as described by Tacitus.'[1] With these words the investigator of the Indian aborigines introduced what he intended to be the first of a series of volumes on the Black Races of Bengal. That a section of the human family, numbering not less than thirty millions of souls, should have lived for a century under British rule, and that their origin, language, and manners of life should be still unknown to the civilised world, affords abundant matter for reflection. While the fair-skinned race which usurped the plains has become the favourite child of modern scholarship, the dark-faced primitive heritors of the soil have continued as we found them, uncared for, despised,

[1] The Kocch, Bodo, and Dhimal Tribes, by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., of the Bengal Civil Service, p. 2, preface. 8vo, Calcutta 1847.

hiding away among their immemorial mountains and forests. The study of Aryan speech has done more in half a century to explain the history of man, than all the previous efforts of fifty generations of scholars. From the discovery of Sanskrit a new era of human thought dates. Sanskrit grammar forms the keystone of philology, and Sanskrit ethics have left their impress deeply graven on modern philosophy. But the other races—races which have a history more ancient and perhaps not less instructive than the Aryans, if we could only find it out—have been wholly overlooked. The few inquirers who at an early period interested themselves in the subject, were cut off or otherwise interrupted before their researches went far enough to attract, or indeed to merit, the attention of European scholars, and Government has too generally dealt with the aborigines of Bengal as with tribes incapable of improvement—as a race from whom the best that can be hoped is that it will keep quiet till it dies out.

The aborigines in Southern India have received a little more attention, but their past is still unexplained. In Madras and Bombay the purely aboriginal element appears in such strength in the vernaculars—forming three-quarters of the whole Telugu vocabulary—that it was impossible wholly to overlook the races from which it was derived.[2]

[2] Atsu-Telugu or purely aboriginal words form one-half of the whole vocabulary: Tatsaman and Tadbhavan, or words directly or indirectly derived from the Sanskrit, form one quarter; Anya desyam, or words borrowed from aboriginal dialects other than the Telugu,

Some acquaintance with non-Aryan philology became a political necessity. But in Bengal the Sanskrit entirely overpowered the aboriginal element, and any researches into the primitive tribes have been prompted by disinterested motives. To Mr. Hodgson and the few inquirers who have followed at a distance in his steps, greater honour is due than the actual results obtained would seem to justify.

In the hope that I may be able to interest both the scholar and the statesman in these lapsed races, I purpose in the following chapter to set forth what I have been able to learn regarding the history, the language, the manners, and the capabilities of the mountaineers of Beerbhoom. The scholar will find that their language and traditions throw an important light on an unwritten chapter in the history of our race. The Indian statesman will discover that these Children of the Forest are not so utterly fallen away from the commonwealth of nations as he has supposed, that they are prompted by the same motives of self-interest, amenable to the same reclaiming influences as other men, and that upon their capacity for civilisation the future extension of English enterprise in Bengal in a large measure depends.

For ordinary purposes, the twofold division of the Indian races into Aryans and aborigines is suffi-

form one quarter. When the labours of Mr. Ellis of the Madras Civil Service, the Rev. Dr Caldwell, and Mr. A. D. Campbell, in Southern India, are seconded by researches among the aboriginal tribes of the north, scholars will have sufficient evidence to pronounce upon the existence of a primitive Tamulian stock. But not till then.

cient. But when we come to look narrowly into the matter, it appears that, while the Aryans embrace a single family only, under the term aborigines are included at least several races differing from each other as widely as the Japanese differs from the Egyptian or from the Dane. The physiologist, judging from the features and bodily structure, pronounces that certain of the Indian aboriginal tribes bear a strong affinity to the Malay race; that others are equally closely related to the Chinese; and that others, again, are unconnected, or very distantly connected, with either. Philology has up to this time given forth no certain sound on the subject; and, indeed, all that linguistic research has done, is to involve the question in still greater mystery, by revealing a multitude of languages apparently devoid of affinity to each other. In a single thinly-peopled tract, one inquirer counted twenty-eight distinct dialects, mutually unintelligible to the different tribes who use them;[8] and the whole number of aboriginal tongues throughout India is not less than two hundred. Whether, like the hundred and thirty languages that Pliny says were spoken in the Colchian market-place, these will ever be shown to be long separated members of the same family, is a point on which no one in our present state of knowledge can pronounce; but such

[8] In the district between Kamaun and Assam. Among the Naga tribes also, living in a small district near Assam, about thirty different languages exist, affording a striking proof of the tendency of unwritten speech to split up into numerous dialects. An intervening hill, a ravine or a river, is enough to divide the language of a district.

a union can only result from a careful scrutiny of the isolated members.

When this chapter was begun, four years ago, I had intended to append to it a comparative grammar and vocabulary of six aboriginal languages, including that of the highlanders of Beerbhoom, as a contribution towards a more exact knowledge of the non-Aryan races of India. But in the course of subsequent researches in the India Office Library, two large trunks of manuscripts, the result of Mr. B. H. Hodgson's labours during thirty years among the Himalayan tribes, passed into my hands. At first it was proposed to incorporate this unpublished collection with the present chapter; but I found that, to do Mr. Hodgson's discoveries justice, the entire volume would barely suffice. It has therefore been determined to compile a distinct work on the aborigines of Northern India, based upon Mr. Hodgson's researches; and it seems unnecessary to swell this book with vocabularies, which will find a more suitable place among the eighty non-Aryan languages which I hope to bring together in the proposed volume.

The Santals or hill-tribes on the west of Beerbhoom belong to that section of the aborigines which physically resembles neither the Chinese nor the Malay. The Santal is a well-built man, standing about five feet seven, weighing eight stone, without the delicate features of the Aryan, but undisfigured by the oblique eye of the Chinese, or the heavy physiognomy of the Malay. His skull is

round, rather than broad or narrow; his face is also round, rather than oblong or square; the lower jaw is not heavy; the nose is irregular; the lips are a little thicker than the Aryan's, but not thick enough to attract remark; the cheek-bone is higher than that of the Hindu, but not higher in anything like the degree in which the Mongolian is, rather as the cheek-bone of a Scotchman is higher than that of an Englishman. He is about the same height as the common Hindu, shorter than the Brahman of pure Aryan descent, heavier than the Hindu, hardier than the Hindu, more squarely built than the Hindu, with a forehead not so high, but rounder and broader; a man created to labour rather than to think, better fitted to serve the manual exigencies of the present, than to speculate on the future or to venerate the past.

The Santals inhabit the whole western frontier of Lower Bengal, from within a few miles of the sea to the hills of Bhagulpore. Their country is the shape of a curved strip, about four hundred miles long by a hundred broad, giving an area of forty thousand square miles. In the western jungles they are the sole population; in a large tract towards the north they form nineteen-twentieths of it; in the plains the proportion is much smaller, and indeed the race gradually slides into the low-caste Hindus. They certainly number a million and a half and probably approach two millions of human beings, claiming a common origin, speaking one language, following similar customs, worshipping the same gods, and

forming in all essentials a distinct ethnical entity among the aboriginal races.

The present generation of Santals have no definite idea of where their forefathers came from. It is a race whose subsoil of tradition is thin and poor. Written documents they have none. Go into one village, mark what appears on the surface, listen to the chants of the young men, hear the few legends which the elders relate at evening under the shade of the adjoining Sal Grove, and subsequent investigations will not materially change first impressions.

The earliest fact of which the race seems to have been conscious, was the vicinity of stupendous mountains. Before man was, the Great Mountain talked to himself in solemn solitude. The Mountain communes with the Creator at man's birth; clothes him, and teaches him to produce the first comforts of life. The Mountain, by bringing together the first pair in marriage, stands as the *fons et origo* of the race. Their legend of the creation runs thus. In the old time that was before this time, the Great Mountain stood alone among the waters. Then the Great Mountain saw that birds moved upon the face of the waters, and he said within himself, Where shall we put these birds? let us put them on a water-lily in the midst of the waters, and let them rest there. Then were huge prawns created, and the prawns raised the rocks from under the waters, and likewise the water-lily. Thereafter the rocks were covered with diverse manner of creeping things;

and the Great Mountain said, Let the creeping things cover the rocks with earth, and they covered them. And when the rocks were covered, the Lord of All commanded the Great Mountain to sow grass; and when the grass grew up, the first man and woman arose from two duck's eggs that had been laid upon the water-lily. Then the Lord of All asked of the Great Mountain, What are these? And the Great Mountain answered, They are man and woman; since they are born, let them stay. After that the Lord of All told the Great Mountain to look once again, and behold the man and woman had grown up, but they were naked. So the Lord of All commanded the Great Mountain to clothe them, and the Great Mountain gave them cloth, to the man ten cubits, and to the woman twelve cubits; and the man's clothing sufficed, but the woman's sufficed not.

Then the man and woman being faint, the Great Mountain commanded them to make strong drink. He gave them a handful of leaven, saying, Place it in a pitcher of water, and after four days come again. So they put it in a pitcher, and after four days came again, and behold the water had become the strong drink of the Santals. Then the Great Mountain gave them leaves wherewith to make cups, but commanded them, before they drank, to pour forth an offering unto him.

Thereafter the Great Mountain said, The land is, the man is, and the woman is; but what if the man and woman should die out of the land! Let us

make them merry with strong drink, and let children be born. So the Great Mountain made them merry with strong drink, and seven children were born.[4]

So the man and the woman increased and multiplied, and the land could not hold all the children that were born. In this time they dwelt in Hihiri Pipiri, but when the land would not hold them they journeyed to Chae Champa; and when Chae Champa would not hold them they journeyed to Silda: and when Silda would not hold them they journeyed to Sikar, and from Sikar they journeyed to Nagpur, and from Nagpur to the north, even to Sir.

Such is the story of the creation and dispersion as related in the western jungles of Beerbhoom by men who know not a word of Bengali, and who dread the approach of a Hindu towards their village more than the night-attack of a leopard or tiger. Legends almost word for word the same are told by the Santals of the south and of the north; and if it be possible for ignorance, hatred, and terror of the stranger to keep the legends of a race free from foreign elements, then these represent purely aboriginal traditions. I do not believe, however, that perfect seclusiveness is possible; and after a minute research into such scraps of history as exist, and a careful examination of their language, I am inclined to think that they have unconsciously grafted Sanskrit incidents and scenery on what are at bottom distinct aboriginal legends.

[4] Modesty compels this part of the legend to be curtailed.

I give in an appendix[5] a literal translation of six legends, as delivered to the Rev. Mr. Phillips by the Santals of Orissa, two hundred miles distant from the section of their countrymen among whom the foregoing were gathered, and separated from them by jungles, rivers, and the absence of any means of written communication.

No one can fail to be struck by the analogies which these traditions bear to the Mosaic and to the Sanskrit accounts of the creation. The earth covered with water, the raising up of the land, its preparation for mankind, the nakedness of our first parents, the divine provision for clothing them, and the subsequent dispersion, are points in common; but I belive that in the Santal Genesis, as in that of other races not of Aryan or Semitic descent, the tradition of the creation is mixed up with one of a deluge, when indeed the creation with these less gifted tribes does not begin with a flood. The Aryans, who have distinct traditions relative to both events, speak in very different terms of the two. Their legend of the creation is wrapt up in mystery hardly less solemn than the brief majestic verses of Moses, while their legend of the deluge is one of practical details. 'Then there was neither entity nor nonentity,' runs the Vedic account of the creation; 'there was no atmosphere, nor any sky beyond it. Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day or night. The One breathed calmly with nature; there was

[5] Appendix G.

nothing different from It or beyond It. Darkness there was.' On the other hand, the Sanskrit story of the deluge, like that in the Pentateuch, makes no mystery of the matter. A ship is built, seeds are taken on board, the ship is pulled about for some time by a fish, and at last gets ashore upon a peak of the Himalayas.

The Santal legend describes rather the subsidence of waters than a creation, and the striking features of such a subsidence are accurately detailed. The Great Mountain first stood forth from the deep, while marine fowls and aquatic plants continued to live upon the surface of the water. As the flood went down, rocks appeared, with shell-fish, prawns, and other crustaceous animals. On its further subsidence, it would leave the earth covered with worms and the countless creeping things with which the slime of a retreating tropical river teems. Then would spring up a luxuriant covering of grass, and the earth would be ready for its human occupants. The prominent mention both in the Mosaic and the Santal legends of the use of strong drink, and of indecencies committed under its influence, is certainly a curious coincidence; perhaps it is nothing more.

Another coincidence—I do not venture to call it an analogy—is to be found in the number of children born to the first pair. As the Santal legend immediately divides the human species into seven families, so the Sanskrit tradition assigns the propagation of our race after the flood to seven Rishis.

The mountain home from which the Santals issued, and to which their earliest traditions point, was unquestionably among the Himalayas. The hills, or rather the table-lands of Central India, are not of a character sufficiently striking to have left so permanent an impression on the Santal mind, and there is no evidence of their ever having been near the higher Vindhya ranges. Nor is it possible to understand how they could have reached the Central Table-land, unless from the north. With the Malay type and with the Malay language their features and their speech have no affinities; of the sea or of the larger marine fishes they have no traditions; and we can believe their legendary mountain home to have been in the south instead of in the north, only if we are willing to concede that they are a distinct race, created among the hills of Central India, and not descended from the same first parents as the rest of mankind.

But the traditions and religious beliefs of the Santals are stamped with the influence of another natural phenomenon besides the Great Mountain. A mighty river always affects more or less permanently the people who dwell upon its banks, and such a river forms the second fact in the outward world of which the Santal race display consciousness. In the country which they now chiefly inhabit, and have lived in for ages, mountain streams abound; but none of them attains the dignity of a great river.[6] The largest of them, the Damooda,

[6] This paragraph refers to the Santals adjoining Beerbhoom, not

is fordable even in a carriage during many months of the year. While, therefore, the aborigines of the north-east frontier, living in a land of mighty waters, have a crowded Pantheon of river deities or demons,[7] the aborigines of the Santal country have not been able to find a single stream worthy of being erected into a national god. Nevertheless a faint remembrance of the far-off time when they dwelt beside great rivers, still exerts its influence. The only stream of any consequence in their present country—the Damooda—is regarded with a veneration altogether disproportionate to its size. Thither the superstitious Santal repairs to consult the prophets and diviners, and once a year the tribes make a pilgrimage to its banks, in commemoration of their forefathers. The ceremony is called the Purifying for the Dead; and the influence anciently exerted by great rivers on the Santal beliefs has been of so permanent a character, that to this day the omission to visit, at least once a year, the single river they possess, is visited among some families in the Beerbhoom highlands by loss of social privileges. The same influence makes itself apparent in the touching and beautiful rite, by means of which they unite the dead with the fathers. However remote the jungle in which the Santal may die, his nearest kinsman carries a little relic of the deceased to the

to those of Orissa in the extreme south, or of Rajmahal on the northern frontier of the race.

[7] See the list of deities worshipped by the Assamese hill-men, given in Mr. Hodgson's Essay on the Koech, Bodo, and Dhimal Tribes, p. 166.

river, and places it in the current, to be conveyed to the far-off eastern land from which his ancestors came. Instances have been known of a son following up the traces of a wild beast which had carried off his parent, and watching, without food or sleep, during several days for an opportunity to kill the animal, and secure one of his father's bones to carry to the river.

The value of this ceremony, from a historical point of view, is as little affected by the circumstance that the present generation of Santals can give no account of its origin, as its beauty is impaired by the fact that the Damooda never reaches the great river of the East, by which, in all probability, their ancestors travelled. These rites point distinctly to the influence once exerted on the race by the presence of mighty streams; and the waters of the Damooda, laden with offerings of filial piety, mingle at last in the common ocean with the waters of the great eastern river which in bygone times received their forefathers' bones.

I have enumerated the various countries through which the Santals say they travelled towards their present territory, not because I can derive much information from them myself, but in the hope that other inquirers may, by identifying them, establish conclusively the Santal line of march. Where Hihiri Pipiri may be, or where Chae Champa and Silda may be, I know not for certain; but it is worth mentioning that Pipiri-am means in Santali a butterfly, and that Hihiri is merely a reduplicative

form of it. If Hihiri Pipiri signify the Butterfly Land, it would be in the temperate climate which the Himalayas afford. Neither Hihiri nor Pipiri occurs in Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, or Urdu. The second country, Chae Champa, where the Santals are said to have first become numerous, is possibly the Land of Flowering Trees, the term being a reduplicative plural of Champa, a flowering tree. This would have been in the higher valleys of the Brahmaputra. With Sikar, the fourth on the list, we touch solid ground. It lies upon the Damooda, almost within the ancient district of Beerbhoom, and now forms one of the chief places of pilgrimage of the race. While the Santals to the south of the Damooda say they come from the north, those to the north of it point to the south as their former country; so that it may be assumed that they reached the valley of that river not from the north or the south, but from the east or the west. As they moved westwards from Sikar to Nagpur, within historic times, the east remains as the direction from which they came, being pushed gradually on from the open country to the mountains, as the Hindu population advanced. That this was their general route, an examination of their manners and habits of life will place beyond doubt. They have neither the sullen disposition nor the unconquerable laziness of the very old hill-tribes of Central India; they have carried with them from the plains a love of order, a genial humanity, with a certain degree of civilisation and agricultural habits, which hundreds.

perhaps thousands, of years have not been able to efface. Their very vices are the vices of an oppressed and a driven-out people who have lapsed from a higher state, rather than those of savages who have never known better things.

The language of the Santals, that intangible record on which a nation's past is graven more deeply than on brass tablets or in rock inscriptions, is as rich a field of inquiry as their traditions are meagre and barren. It belongs to the order of speech which, starting from monosyllabic roots, form their inflections by the aid of pronominal particles. It is therefore distinct from the Chinese types, devoid as they are of inflectional structure, and still further apart from the Semitic tongues, starting from characteristic verbal bases consisting of three letters.[8] As its roots are inflexible, it is equally repudiated by that great family of languages based upon biliteral flexible *radices*, to which our own belongs, and of which Sanskrit exhibits the most perfect development. Never subjected to the conservative influences which written documents exert, and indeed devoid of any written character whatever, it has come down to the present generation shrivelled and disintegrated, rather the debris of an ancient language than that ancient language itself. Nevertheless it still survives as a breathing linguistic organism connecting the present with an unfathomed past, and furnishing hints of

[8] A. W. von Schlegel's Observations sur la langue et littérature Provençales, p. 14.

grammatical forms infinitely more numerous and complicated than were guessed of by Panini.

In the Appendix[9] will be found an outline of the Santali grammar, from which scholars who work at leisure, and surrounded by the appliances of philological research, may perhaps derive wider and sounder conclusions than I can. The following pages bring to a common focus the results which the few and scattered investigators of the Santal race have arrived at; and even if some of my deductions should be proved to be unsound, the facts will remain at the service of those who may make a better use of them.[10]

In excavating the Santal language, the first feature that attracts notice is, that although it possesses no letters or written character, the Sanskrit alphabet exactly represents all its sounds. However copious an alphabet may be, it never precisely fits a language of a different stock from that for which it was made. Thus the Perso-Arabic alphabet, one of the most exhaustive that has been framed, possesses no equivalents for at least two of the Sanskrit vowels, for two of the Sanskrit nasals, and probably for the Sanskrit *v* sound. The Sanskrit alphabet, on the other hand, has no equivalents for the five *z* sounds in the Semitic tongues, and is forced to the barbarism of using a *j* roughly to represent them. Nor has it an equivalent for the hard

[9] Appendix H.

[10] Besides MS. contributions placed at my disposal, I have made constant use of the Rev. J. Phillips' Introduction to the Santal Language, Calcutta 1852, with MS. additions by other missionaries.

Semitic aspirate, nor for the second *k* sound, nor for *ain* and *ghain*. Tradition relates how the Greek alphabet, at first consisting of the primitive sixteen Semitic characters, had to borrow four other signs to represent Greek speech; and if any one will write a line of Homer with only the original sixteen letters, and then try to read it out, he will realize the difficulty of representing speech belonging to one of the great families, by an alphabet constructed for a language belonging to another. Nor does the Sanskrit alphabet accurately represent the utterances of the Indian aborigines in general; indeed, the most carefully studied, and perhaps the most widely spoken of these aboriginal tongues—the one which has been taken as the type of all the rest—contains articulations that cannot be conveyed by any alphabet in which Sanskrit is written. The southern aborigines have not only sounds unknown to Aryan speech, but they also want other sounds which the Aryan alphabets very minutely express.[11]

Now we know that the primitive Sanskrit alphabet was deficient in consonants, and required several new letters to represent the articulations of the races whom the Aryans found settled in the land. From the circumstance that the Sanskrit consonants, as finally developed, precisely fit Santal speech, without either deficiency or redundancy, excepting *v*, it appears likely that the aboriginal race whom the Aryan immigrants chiefly dealt with, and from

[11] Note by Mr. F. W. Ellis to the preface to Campbell's Telugu Grammar.

whom they supplemented their consonantal sounds,[12] spoke a tongue phonetically cognate to Santali. The fact that several Santal words are to be found in very old Prakrit gives additional likelihood to this conjecture.

Language is resolvable into two elements—pronouns and roots. The latter represent the material framework, the former the organic and formative principle, which is to man's speech what the vital spark is to his body. From the roots or material element are derived verbs and nouns, but verbs and nouns in a motionless state, devoid of relation, and divested of the idea of position in space or time. Yet, in order that man may speak of a thing, he must first have a conception of it as occupying some position, either in space or in time, either near to himself or distant from him, as being of the present or of the past, or, in the formula of the philologers, as belonging to the *here* or to the *there*. It is the function of the pronoun, understanding that term in its scientific sense, to bridge over this gulf between mind and matter and to form out of inert nouns and verbs the locomotive and half-vital organism of human speech.

The STRUCTURE of language means the method according to which these two elements, the pronoun and the root, combine, the changes which they undergo in the process, and the relation which they bear to each other when united. In former times grammarians pronounced languages distinct if they

12 August Schleicher, Compendium, sec. 122. Weimar, 1866.

employed different sets of pronouns and roots. Modern philology has shown that such differences are often apparent rather than real, and that, even when real, the languages may nevertheless be connected. Similarity or dissimilarity in words affords a much less conclusive proof, one way or the other, than resemblance or want of resemblance in structure. Structure, indeed, is admitted to furnish the only perfectly reliable test by which to compare one tongue with another, and to settle its proper place in the great commonwealth of languages. But although this is admitted, structure has not yet been heartily accepted as the basis of classification. At present languages are arranged in four divisions: 1*st*, The monosyllabic uninflected type, or Chinese; 2*d*, The monosyllabic (biliteral) inflected type, or Indo-European; 3*d*, The triliteral inflected type, or Semitic; 4*th*, The residue, such as the Turanian and African, with the dialects of America and Australia. In this arrangement no single principle of classification is adhered to. It separates the first two classes on account of difference in structure,—the one being inflected, the other uninflected. It separates the second from the third on account of difference in their roots,—the second being based on biliteral, the third on triliteral *radices*. According to the first principle, that of structure, the fourth class might be included as imperfect forms of the second or third; for languages of the fourth class exhibit a kind of inflection. According to the second principle, that which refers to the roots, the fourth

class might be placed under the first or second; for it consists of dialects based on biliteral roots.

The new lights have come from Germany. Adopting *structure* as the basis of classification, and adhering to it throughout, August Schleicher has sketched a systematic arrangement of languages which must sooner or later supplant the unscientific one described above.[13] According to his plan, speech belongs to one or other of the three following types: 1*st*, The isolating languages, consisting of mere roots, incapable of forming compounds, and not susceptible of inflectional change. The Chinese, Anamitic, Siamese, and Burmese exemplify this class. 2*d*, Compounding languages, consisting, like the first, of roots which undergo no change, but which, unlike the first, are capable of forming compounds, and susceptible of inflection by means of the addition, insertion, or prefixing of 'sounds that imply relation.' To this family belong the Finnic, Tataric, Dekhanic, and Bask, the speech of the aborigines of America, the South African or Bantu dialects, and, in general, the greater number of languages. 3*d*, Inflecting languages, consisting of roots that undergo change in inflection, and which are also susceptible of inflection by means of prefixes or suffixes. The Semitic and the Indo-European form two widely separated families of this class.[14]

[13] Compendium der Vergleichenden Grammatik der Indogermanischen Sprachen, von August Schleicher. 8vo. Weimar, 1866.

[14] *Id.* p. 3. Schleicher represents the first, or simple-root class by *R*; the second, or root and suffix class, by *Rs*ˣ, the union of the *Rs* indicating that the root and suffix form one word, and the ˣ that

I purpose to examine, as briefly as possible, according to this new method, the structure of Santali, and to ascertain its place in the great community of languages. Such an inquiry, however essential to a thorough understanding of the rural population of Bengal, will involve technicalities that may prove distasteful to some readers. Those, therefore, for whom a philological *excursus* possesses little interest, can pass on to page 179, where they will find its main results concisely set forth.

That Santali does not belong to Schleicher's first class—the Isolating languages—a single example is sufficient to prove. The word for tiger is *kul;* and if a Santal wishes to denote the dual of this noun, he does not say 'two-tiger' or 'tiger-two,' using distinct words as a Chinaman would, but compounds the root *kul* with a dual suffix *kin*, and makes one word of it; thus, *kulkin*. In the same way he expresses the plural, not by two words, 'tiger-many,' as the Isolating languages do, but by compounding the root with the plural suffix *ko;* thus, *kulko*. The *kin* and the *ko* are not mere additions. They are to a certain extent incorporated with the root, and the compounds thus formed become bases for the declension of the dual and plural: thus, genitive dual, *kulkin-rini*,

the suffix is susceptible of change in the process of combination; the third is represented by $R^x s^x$, the x above the R and the s expressing that both root and suffix are susceptible of change during the process of inflection. There is some little confusion on this point in Schleicher's text (p. 3), but it is cleared up in the Addenda.

of two tigers; dative plural, *kulko-ṭhen*, to or near to several tigers.

Santali, therefore, must belong either to the second or third of Schleicher's classes; and to find which of the two it falls under, it is necessary to ascertain whether, in compounding its cases and tenses, the root undergoes any change. To ensure perfect accuracy at this stage, every part of speech ought to be examined, and the Santal roots should be traced through the various cognate languages. Such a review would occupy many pages; but a few examples will suffice to illustrate how it ought to be gone about, and to indicate the process by which I have arrived at my conclusion on the subject. First, of the Santal nouns: the root never undergoes change in its internal structure. nor does it even admit of elisions or phonetic changes of its terminal letter. Thus, not only do nouns ending in a consonant—like *herel*, 'man'—continue the same in all the oblique cases of the singular, dual, and plural; but Santali is so jealous of any change in the root, that it does not permit the conjunction of terminal vowels in declension with suffixes beginning with a vowel. Thus, *baḍe*, 'the banyan tree,' compounded with *iate*, the suffix of the instrumental case, does not undergo any alteration, such as *baḍay-iate*, but remains *baḍe-iate*; nor does *kaḍa*, a 'buffalo,' with the same suffix, exhibit the *Guṇa* change, *kaḍe-ate* or *kaḍayate*, but continues *kaḍa-iate*. In the same way with the verbs: the root *tahen*, 'remain,' forms its numbers, persons, and

tenses not by alteration in its own structure, but by the addition of suffixes. Thus, future, *tahen-aï*, 'he will remain;' *tahen-akin*, 'they two will remain;' *tahen-ako*, 'they will remain' (plural). Imperfect tense, *tahen-en-aï*, 'he remained;' *tahen-en-akin*, 'they two remained;' *tahen-en-ako*, 'they remained.' Pluperfect tense, *tahen-len-aï*, 'he had remained;' dual, *tahen-len-akin;* plural, *tahen-len-ako.* Subjunctive mood, *tahen-cho-e*, 'he may remain;' potential, *tahen-koh-ai*, 'he might remain;' imperative, *tahen-mai;* infinitive, *tahen-te*, or among the northern Santals *tahen.* Participles: *tahen-kate*, 'remaining;' *tahen-en-khan*, 'having remained.' Gerunds: *tahen-ente*, *tahen-lente*, and *tahen-akante*, 'by remaining.'

Occasionally, but rarely, the verbs exhibit phonetic changes of terminal vowels, and in a single instance of a terminal nasal.

The pronouns are more complicated, but the changes they exhibit in the roots arise from employing different bases in the dual and plural. These changes are principally confined to the first person. Thus: *ing*, 'I'; *alim* or *alam*, 'we two;' *ale* or *aban*,[15] 'we' (plural). *Am*, 'thou;' dual, *aben;* plural, *ape.* *Ona*, 'it;' dual, *onakin;* plural, *onako* or *onko.*

Santali, therefore, does not belong to the truly Inflecting Languages, which change their roots to form some of their oblique cases and moods, but to

[15] The Rev. J. Phillips; but cf. the dual and plural of the Sanskrit *asmad.*

Schleicher's second class—the Compounding Languages. This family occupies, so far as its structure is concerned, an intermediate position between the other two. The simplest form of speech is the Isolating, which modifies its roots not by forming compound cases or inflections, but simply by adding other roots. It is represented by $R+r+r$, etc. The next class has a certain agglutinative power, by which it combines the simple roots with other roots signifying relation, and which are generally termed pronouns or pronominal particles. If we consider these pronominals as debased or disintegrated roots, and represent them by the initial letter of that word, the formula of the second class would be Rr, the union of the large and small r indicating that the two roots, the base and the inflection, become a compound word. Sometimes the inflectional root undergoes change; and this fact may be represented by placing x above the second r, so that Schleicher's second class may be represented either as Rr or Rr^x. In his third class, the roots —*i.e.* the base and the pronominal—are still more closely united, and both may undergo change; the formula therefore is $R^x r^x$.

So far, therefore, as structure is concerned, no break or chasm can be found between the multiform varieties of human speech. They rise one above the other by easy gradations, each class exhibiting a higher degree of activity than the one below it. The Isolating class cannot form compounds, and express themselves by an endless string of inco-

hesive roots; thus, $R + r$ *ad infinitum*. The Compounding class have a certain agglutinative power by which the pronominals, or roots expressing relation, stick to the main root of the word, but the main root undergoes no change; thus, Rr or Rr^x. In the Inflecting class, the cohesive powers are still stronger, the roots expressing relation are firmly cemented with the main root of the word, and the main root has a self-inflecting power of expressing moods and cases by changes within itself; thus, $R^x r^x$. The three classes represent different stages of formative activity; and, without laying undue stress on the comparison, it is curious to notice the fact that each of the great families of the human race has exhibited more or less political and social activity in proportion to the formative powers of the language which it speaks. The Burmese, Chinese, and Anamitic nations disclose a tendency to political isolation, and an absence of ethnic vitality singularly analogous to their monosyllabic isolating speech. The class above them, the Tataric tribes, who from time to time have rolled down in masses upon Europe and Southern Asia, developed a more active genius, with a larger capacity for organized enterprise, just as their language developed the formative principle in a greater degree than the Chinese. The third class, the Aryan and Semitic stocks, exhibit the highest form both of social and linguistic activity, rearing for themselves orderly empires alike in the physical and the metaphysical worlds, and displaying the same strong vitality in their political

history and practical life as in their speech. It would be easy to push the comparison further, and to show, for example among the Compounding class of languages, that the nations which have played the most active part in the world have also evolved the richest grammatical forms. The Tungusic family have never exhibited vitality either in their political movements or in their speech; the Mongolic are a stage higher in both; while the Turkic and Finnic branches stand at the head of Turanian mankind, whether we judge of them by their languages, or by the creative energy to which Europe owes the Ottoman empire and the Kudic Kalewala.

In India, all the three classes of languages meet as upon a common camping-ground. Bengal, with its dependencies, forms a vast basin into which every variety of speech has been flowing since prehistoric times. There the whole philological series will be found, each stratum lying above its predecessor; from the Isolating languages, that hard primary formation, through the secondary layers of the Compounding class, up to the most recent deposits of Inflecting speech, the alluvial Bengali and Hindi. Thus:

FIRST CLASS: *R+r* Languages.	Burmese:[16] Chinese, spoken by settlers in the large towns; the dialects of some of the tribes on the eastern and south-eastern frontier of Bengal.

---

[16] August Schleicher, Compendium, p. 3, 2d ed.

SECOND CLASS: Rr and Rr^x Languages.	The Himalayan dialects:[17] Santali, Kol, and so far as has been ascertained, the languages of the hill-tribes in general throughout Bengal and Southern India.
THIRD CLASS: $R^x r^x$ Languages.	*Aryan Branch:* Sanskrit; Hindusthani; Bengal; Hindi, etc. *Semitic Branch:* the Arabic of the Mussulman ministers of religion, etc. *Semi-Aryan:* the half-Arabic Persian which until recently was the official language, and still forms the vernacular of the upper classes of the Mussulman population.

The study of Sanskrit speech in Northern India has brought to light the affinities of the long separated Aryan members of the Inflecting class of languages, and proved the common parentage of two-thirds of civilised mankind. But this forms only a single family of the world's inhabitants. The study of the aboriginal dialects of Bengal is destined, I believe, to do a similar work for the vast ethnical residue; to construct a well-connected series out of scattered fragments, and possibly at some distant date to furnish the connecting links between the three great orders of human speech. The materials which Turanian scholars in Europe, such as Klaproth, A. Remusat, and Castren, had to collect by laborious research or perilous travel, lie at the very door of the Indian missionary or magistrate, and official machinery might be easily and inexpensively set in motion for making a clean sweep of the whole non-Aryan languages of Bengal.

[17] The ranges to the east of the higher valley of the Brahmaputra appear to form a linguistic watershed. Assam, a district of Lower Bengal, is an ethnical as well as a political frontier.

Two things have to be done—to collect the vocabulary, and to compile the grammar of each group of dialects. Until a comprehensive comparative dictionary be drawn up, it is impossible to pronounce on the phonetic changes the letters are subject to in the Compounding class of languages, and hence also impossible to recognise with certainty the same root under the diverse costumes in which it may appear in different parts of the country. This work has been already accomplished for the Aryan languages, and scholars can now pronounce with tolerable certainty what alterations each letter undergoes in any specified variety of inflecting speech.[18]

For the compilation of aboriginal grammars and their classification, Schleicher's method affords valuable hints. His business is exclusively with the Inflecting class; but he states that the second class, the Compounding languages, to which the aboriginal dialects of India belong, are formed by the union of the root with prefixes, insertions, and suffixes. Leaving out the middle variety for the sake of clearer illustration, we obtain four simple and four complex orders from the other two. Thus, (1) the root with a suffixed pronominal root unchanged, Rr, (2) or with the pronominal changed, $R\,r^{x}$; (3) the root with a prefixed pronominal root unchanged, rR, (4) or with the pronominal changed, $r^{x}R$. The possible Compound varieties are formed by

[18] Grundzüge der Griechischen Etymologie, von Georg Curtius, pp. 120, 121, 2d ed., Leipzig 1866; or Schleicher's better arranged table of consonant-changes, Compendium, p. 340, 2d ed., Weimar 1866.

attaching both a prefix and a suffix to the root; thus, (5) rRr, (6) r^xRr, (7) rRr^x, (8) r^xRr^x. Here, therefore, we have a scientific method of arrangement, beginning with a class almost as devoid of life as the Isolating languages, and ending with one which would exhibit a formative activity hardly exceeded by the Inflecting. If the scattered investigators of the aboriginal races of India would agree to accept this or any other uniform method, and thus bring their results to a common focus, the chief obstacle in the way of non-Aryan philology would be got rid of. The combination of the symbolic letters may be made to indicate the whole number of possible species. All that the Indian students have to do is to arrange each language in its proper class, leaving the hypothetical existence of the other species, and all doubtful topics of speculation, to European scholars.

Although Santali is proved from its structure to belong to the Compounding class of languages, and to the second or Rr^x species of that class, it nevertheless exhibits curious analogies to languages of the Inflecting order, and in particular to Sanskrit. Many of these analogies may be explained away by the contact of the Sanskrit-speaking population, but all cannot. Three of the Santali pronouns and three sets of nouns will suffice to illustrate this :—

There is a curious particle, *chit*, in Sanskrit, which never stands by itself as a personal pronoun, but is used to impart indefiniteness to the relative. Thus, *kas*, who, with the particle *chit* added to it, becomes

kas-chit, some one. The same particle supplies the indefinite conjunction *chet*, if. But this particle, which in the Sanskrit tongue has almost dropped out of the rank of independent pronominals, and clings as an affix to a stronger root, stands forth in Santali as the pronoun of indefiniteness, resting on its own strength, and the parent of a numerous family of words. Thus Santali, *chet*, what; *chet-hong*, anything; *chet-cho*, perhaps, who knows; *chet-leko*, like what, etc.

The Santali adjective *jo-to*, all, is certainly as unlike the corresponding Sanskrit word *sarva* as can be. But *jo-to* is contracted, according to the ordinary rule, from *ja-uta;* and the naked root thus obtained, *ja* forms the basis of a number of Santali compounds signifying number, quantity, or continued duration. Thus *ja-age* and *ja-jug*, a great number of times, for ever; *ja-uhilo*, always; *ja-arate*, to bring together a large quantity, to collect; the adjective *jak*, numerous, populous, which has been adopted without change into low Bengali. It happens that a single adverb survives in Sanskrit which suffices to preserve this root in a form not liable to be mistaken. The Sanskrit *ja-tu*, ever, sometimes, with its negative *na ja-tu*, never, at no time, forms almost the sole undisguised representative among the Indo-Aryan pronominals of a strong and fecund root in that primitive language from which the whole Indo-Germanic family in common with the Santali appears to have sprung.

One of the Santali demonstrative pronouns is

na-i,[19] this, which appears in a variety of compounds, such as *na-hari*, to this, until, now ; *na-te*, this way, hither ; *na-nte*, here, etc. One of its derivatives is *na-se*, which never stands alone, but always as a reduplicative plural, *nā-se nā-se*, some. Compare this with the Sanskrit indeclinable particle, *nā-nā*, various. The Santali third person pronouns furnish what some may be inclined to consider a verification of one of Dr. Donaldson's conjectures. Thirty years ago this most ingenious of philologers enumerated four separate particles for the third person pronoun, *ta*, *na*, *nu*, and *ni*, only two of which could be distinctly identified in the languages he had examined. In Santali the whole four are found side by side, bare of accidental wrappings, and in the very forms that Donaldson described. Thus, *ta-i*, his ; *na-i*,[19] this person ; *nu-a* and *ni-a*, this thing. This may be only a coincidence, but it is, at any rate, a very curious one.

Passing to the nouns, the Santali glossary differs from the Sanskrit in a far greater degree than the Greek and English do, and perhaps in the same degree that the Arabic does. In a number of roots expressing very simple ideas, however, a striking resemblance appears. Thus, to take the divisions of time, the most obvious of which is the separation of day from night. Day is the one universal phenomenon in all ages and in all countries ; and the same root has served the Sanskrit conquerors of India,

19 Properly pronounced with an aspirate after the *n*; thus, *na-hai*. *Na-hari* = *na-ahari*.

the Roman conquerors of Europe, and the Saxon reclaimers of the New World, to express it. This root, *div*, means primarily 'light' or 'brightness;' but the Sanskrit likewise exhibits the remains of what must have been either an older form of this root, or more likely a distinct root, *din*, 'day.' Of the first root, *div*, which has been so universally adopted by Indo-Germanic speech, not a vestige can be found in Santali; but the second. *din*, which has, comparatively speaking, fallen out of use among the great brotherhood of languages, is distinctly preserved in Sanskrit and Santali. In both these tongues, however, it shows signs of old age and weakness, and leans on stronger words for support. Its true sphere is in composition, where it rivals the other root in Sanskrit, and overpowers all competitors in Santali. Thus Sanskrit root, *din*, a day; Santali, *din-kalom*, last year; *din-talaute*, to spend time, to provide for the future: *din-kiloh*, daily, continually. It is questionable whether *din*, a day, ever stands by itself in pure Santali; but the above compounds are inherent and genuine parts of the aboriginal vernacular. There are several words for 'day' in Santali, a common one being *maha*.

Santali, being barren of abstract terms, has no word for 'time;' but it forms a number of compounds, expressing periods of time, from a root *kāl*: thus, *kāl-om*, next year; *din-kāl-om*, last year; *hal-kālom*, two years ago; *mahang-kālom*, three years ago. Now, curiously enough, *kāl-a* is the Sanskrit word for 'time,' from the root *kăl*.

The foregoing examples have pointed to the existence of common roots for very primitive ideas in Santali and Sanskrit; but the structural differences between the Inflecting and Compounding languages are too great and too completely unexplained, to permit of any attempt to follow up these indications to a common or even a cognate origin.

While treating of the alphabet, we found reasonable ground to conjecture that the Aryan invaders of India had come in contact with a language allied to Santali in primitive times, and mentioned that the Prakrit, a very early form of vernacular Sanskrit, had adopted pure Santali terms. Thus, instead of employing the Aryan *stambha*, 'a post,' 'a pillar,' 'a peg,' the Sanskrit population used an aboriginal word, *khuṇṭ-a*.[21] This *khuṇṭ-a* is an undisguised Santali word, the only change being in the terminal vowel: thus, ancient Prakrit, *khŭṇṭ-a*; modern Santali, *khŭṇṭ-i*, 'a post.' The identity is complete, even to the circumstance that in both words the cerebral *ṭ* and *ṇ* are used. *Bheḍa*, 'a sheep,' appears to furnish another example. It is a Santal word in use at the present day; in Sanskrit it stands alone, and without any clear origin. The cerebral *ḍ*, with which it is spelt, renders the probability still greater that it is a true aboriginal word which the Aryan settlers borrowed from the races they found living in the land. Again, Sanskrit grammarians state that the word *poṭa*,[22] 'belly,' was

[21] Mrichhakati, 40. Muir's Sanskrit Texts, vol. ii. p. 36.
[22] Mrichhakati, 72 and 112. Sanskrit Texts, vol. ii. p. 36.

an aboriginal word that had crept into the Prakrit. Now, *poṭa*, spelt with a cerebral *ṭ* as in Prakrit, survives among the Santals at the present day, and in almost every village some corpulent man goes by the nickname of *poṭea*, 'fat-belly.'

In some cases, a word thus introduced from the aboriginal dialect into the spoken language of the victorious Aryans has a very sad story to tell. Take for example the Santali numeral *pon-ea*, or in composition *pon*, 'four.' No vocable could be more distinct from the Sanskrit *chatur*, or the modern Bengali, *chari*, 'four.' The lower classes in Bengal, however, employ a curious word signifying 'one-fourth less.' Thus, instead of saying two and three-quarters, they say a quarter less than three, and frequently express seventy-five as one-fourth less than one hundred, and seven hundred and fifty as one-fourth less than a thousand. The word never appears in Bengali as a numeral, but always in this odd sense of one-fourth less. It is identical, however, with the Santali numeral 'four.' Thus: Bengali, *poun-e*, 'one-fourth less;' Santali, *pon-ea*, 'four.' In very old Bengali, moreover, there was a word, *po-ya*, 'a quarter,' which still half survives in the vulgate of the market-place, and which grammarians pretend to derive from a Sanskrit radical, *pad*, 'to go,' through *păd* or *pāda*, 'a foot;' hence a metrical foot, the fourth part of a verse, also used as a technical term in Algebra to express the least root in an affected square. In connecting *poya* with *pad*, the grammarians may possibly be right;

but in deriving *poya* directly from *pad* they are certainly wrong. The Bengali *poune* and *poya* are unquestionably adopted from *pon-ea*, the vernacular of the aborigines. At first the conquered tribes succeeded in introducing their more general term *poya*, a quarter, into the composite language which they and their Aryan masters spoke; but four Sanskrit rivals were in the field,[23] all signifying a quarter, and the Sanskrit, being the stronger language, drove the poor aboriginal word out of Bengali speech, as the Aryans had driven the aborigines out of Bengal. Moreover, as the aboriginal remnant which stayed in the open country were reduced to slavery, so their word for 'a fourth,' while degraded from the polite language, was allowed to survive in the mouths of hucksters, who buy and sell at this day by the aboriginal *poya*, 'quarter.' On the other hand, the aboriginal term for 'one-fourth less' found no Sanskrit synonym to oppose it, and so was able to hold its ground in the composite speech of the Bengali people.

The Santals, on their side, have borrowed very liberally from Aryan speech. Their vocabulary is filled with words of unmistakeably Sanskrit origin, and which appear to have come, not from Bengali or Hindi, but through some more ancient dialect. We have seen that Prakrit came in contact with Santali and borrowed from it at a very distant date;

[23] (1) Chaturtha; (2) Chaturthansha; (3) Pada, only as a term in mathematics or prosody; (4) Ek-ha, contracted from Eka pada (Haughton).

and it would be easy to show that Santali is under similar obligations to Prakrit. Its meagre list of abstract terms is transferred almost without change from the Apabransa of the ancient Aryan settlers.

The political unit of the Aryan race, from its first historical appearance in India, is the village, and upon village institutions the whole social economy of the Hindus is based. Of the village as a political unit, the *gram* of the Indo-Aryan tongues, no trace exists in genuine Santali. The aboriginal race goes a step further back, and rests its system on the simpler political unit of a nomadic society, the family. The Indo-Aryan word for a household, *kula*, is not found by itself in Santali, but it subsists as the groundwork of every Santal community. A Santal village consists essentially of a single street, with houses on each side; and the pathway running between is called throughout the whole Santal country the *kula-hi*, the divider of the families.

Those who wish to pursue the subject of Santal speech further, may turn to the Grammar given in the Appendix (H). Enough has been said in the foregoing pages to establish five points with regard to this important section of the aboriginal hill-men of western Bengal.

1*st.* That their vernacular is in structure distinct from Sanskrit and the Inflecting order of speech, and belongs to Schleicher's second class, the Compounding languages.

2*d.* Nevertheless, that it appears to contain certain roots expressive of very simple ideas, in com-

mon with Sanskrit, but not derived from Sanskrit, in the same way as the Semitic and Aryan languages exhibit a few identical roots, not directly derived from each other, but probably from a common source.[24]

3*d*. That, at a very remote period, Sanskrit came in contact with Santali, or the ancient representative of Santali; that Sanskrit adopted from Santali, *probably*, a number of aboriginal sounds with which to supplement its primitive meagre alphabet,[25] *certainly* several words which appear unchanged in the Prakrit of ancient times and in the Santali of the present day; that Bengali, which, roughly speaking, is to Prakrit what Prakrit was to Sanskrit, has gone on borrowing from Santali, while Santali has borrowed very largely from Aryan dialects of more ancient date.

4*th*. That the study of Santali, along with the other aboriginal dialects of India, is possibly destined to do for the Compounding languages what the study of Sanskrit has done for the Inflecting languages; that a scientific method exists, according to which this study might be conducted; that in Bengal and its dependencies the whole varieties of human speech meet, presenting peculiar facilities for research, and affording a basis from which a properly equipped philologer might sail forth and discover a new linguistic world.

[24] Müller's Survey of the Three Families of Languages, p. 27, 2d ed. Donaldson's Maskil le-Sopher, p. 12–41. Gesenius; Ewald.

[25] According to Schleicher, the Sanskrit alphabet originally contained only fifteen consonants, and adopted nineteen from the aborigines.

5*th*. That, as Sanskrit points to the north-west of the Himalayas as the starting-point of the Indo-Aryans, so Santali points to the countries on the north-east—the *cunabula* of Compounding speech—as the primitive home of the Indian aborigines; while Santal legends furnish hints as to their march through Eastern Bengal, spreading westwards until beaten back, before Aryan migrations, to the highlands of the lower valley.

Of a supreme and beneficent God the Santal has no conception. His religion is a religion of terror and deprecation. Hunted and driven from country to country by a superior race, he cannot understand how a Being can be more powerful than himself, without wishing to harm him. Discourses upon the attributes of the Deity excite no emotion among the more isolated sections of the race, except a disposition to run away and hide themselves in the jungle, and the only reply made to a missionary at the end of an eloquent description of the omnipotence of God, was, 'And what if that Strong One should eat me?'

But although the Santal has no God from whose benignity he may expect favour, there exist a multitude of demons and evil spirits, whose spite he endeavours by supplications to avert. So far from being without a religion, his rites are infinitely more numerous than those of the Hindu: the superstitious element in his nature is more on the alert, and his belief in the near presence of an unseen world more productive of practical results

in his conduct. He knows no God who will reward the good; but a host of demons are ever at hand to punish the wicked, to scatter diseases, to spread murrain among the cattle, to blight the crops, and only to be bribed by animal-suffering and a frequent outpouring of blood.

The worship of the Santals is based upon the family. Each household has its own deity (*ora-bonga*), which it adores with unknown rites, and scrupulously conceals from strangers. So strict is the secrecy that one brother does not know what another brother worships, and the least allusion to the subject brings a suspicious cloud upon the mountaineer's brow, or sends him off abruptly at the top of his speed to the forest. So far as I have been able to learn, the prayers addressed to these family gods are to avert evil rather than to obtain benefits. Thus: 'May the storm spare my thatch;' 'may the black rot pass by my rice-fields;' 'let my wife not bear a daughter;' 'may the usurer be eaten by wild beasts.' The head of the family on his death-bed whispers the name of the family god to his eldest son, and thus the same object of domestic worship is handed down from generation to generation. Unlike the Latin Penates—the beneficent protectors of the Roman household—the family god of the Santals represents the secret principle of evil, which no bolts can shut out, and which dwells an unseen but eternally malignant presence beside every hearth. In addition to the family god, each household worships

the ghosts of its ancestors. The Santal, without any distinct conception of his own immortality or of a future life, cannot believe that the link between man and this earth is wholly dissolved by death, and imagines himself constantly surrounded by a shadowy world. Disembodied spirits flit disconsolately among the fields they once tilled, stand upon the banks of the mountain streams in which they fished, and glide in and out of the dwellings where they were born, grew up, and died. These ghostly crowds require to be pacified in many ways, and the Santal dreads his Lares as much as he does his Penates.

Adjoining the Santal village is a grove of their national tree,[26] which they believe to be the favourite resort of all the family gods of the little community. From its silent gloom the bygone generations watch their children and children's children playing their several parts in life, not altogether with an unfriendly eye. Nevertheless the ghostly inhabitants of the grove are sharp critics, and deal out crooked limbs, cramps and leprosy, unless duly appeased. Several times a year the whole hamlet, dressed out in its showiest, repairs to the grove to do honour to the *Lares Rurales* with music and sacrifice. Men and women join hands, and, dancing in a large circle, chant songs in remembrance of the original founder of the community, who is venerated as the head of the village Pantheon. Goats, red cocks, and chickens are sacrificed; and while some of the worshippers are told off to cook the flesh for the common festival at

[26] The Sal (*Shorea Robusta*, Hort. Beng. p. 42)

great fires, the rest separate into families, and dance round the particular trees which they fancy their domestic Lares chiefly haunt. Among the more superstitious tribes, it is customary for each family to dance round every single tree, in order that they may not by any chance omit the one in which their gods may be residing!

Besides the village deities of the Sal grove, the Santal finds gods, ghosts, or demons, requiring to be appeased, wherever he goes. Thus, the Abgi, or ghouls who eat men ; the Pargana Bonga, parish deities whose name is legion : both of which classes seem to be the tutelary divinities of ancient villages which have been deserted. They now wander disconsolate through the Santal territory until they find some tree or cave to dwell in. Traces of that superstition, to which the Greeks have given so beautiful a form, survive in the Da-bonga (river demons), Daddi-bonga (well demons), Pakri-bonga (tank demons), Buru-bonga (mountain demons), Bir-bonga (forest gods). Distinct traces of Sabean rites also exist among the Santals. Chando, the sun-god, although he seldom receives sacrifice, is theoretically acknowledged as supreme. Sometimes they adore him as the Sim-bonga, the god who eats chickens, and once in four or five years a feast in his honour is held. The Santal religion, in fact, seems to consist of a mythology constructed upon the family basis, but rooted in a still more primitive system of nature-worship.

The next step to the village, in a society orga-

nized upon the family basis, is the tribe. Of these there are seven among the Santals,[27] each of which claims descent from a common parent, and preserves its own rites. Once a year the tribe-god Abe-bonga is adored with great solemnity; but as the children follow the tribe of their father, only male animals are sacrificed, and women are excluded from the feast which ends the ceremony. One festival is so like another, that a single description by an eye-witness will suffice: 'Old and young, male and female, assembled in thousands, and entered with great spirit and gusto into the hilarity of the occasion. The women, in their best, set off with massive brass ornaments, joined hands with the men, and danced in the open air with their heads uncovered. The men aimed at something more gay and grotesque in their costume; and if all the colours of the rainbow were not displayed by them, certainly the hedgehog, the peacock, and a variety of the feathered tribe had been laid under contribution in order to supply the young Santal beaux with plumes. These varied both as to length and beauty. While some were no more than a single foot in height, others were full five feet, and shot up like stocks of lettuce gone to seed. Nor was the perpendicular regarded as the only or most graceful position for wearing these borrowed feathers. They were set and hung in all directions and inclinations, from the upright to the

[27] The number varies in different parts of the country—twelve in the north, seven in the southern and central settlements.

horizontal. Strips of red, blue, and yellow cloth, bound about their heads and loins, added to the effect. The drum and fife were accompanied by the human voice, and parties of twenty or thirty joining hands danced in circles, or more correctly, in semicircles. There may have been twenty-five or thirty of these parties in the field, and each with its own music in its centre, who laboured and danced the livelong day as well as one whole night. The continued heavy roar of so many drums, and the clamour of a multitude of human voices, the wild gaiety and grotesque costumes of the dancers, and their half-naked bodies, all combined to produce a spectacle of savage life at once imposing and impressive.'[28]

What the tribe is to the family, that the race is to the tribe. The national god of the Santals is Mārang Buru, the Great Mountain, who appears in their legends as the guardian and sponsor of their race; the divinity who watched over their birth, provided for their earliest wants, and brought their first parents together in marriage. In private and in public, in time of tribulation and in time of wealth, in health and in sickness, on the natal bed and by the death-bed, the Great Mountain is invoked with bloody offerings. He is the one religious link that binds together the nation; and the sacrifices, instead of being limited to a few animals, as is the case with the family gods, may be anything that grows from or moves upon the earth.

[28] Mr. Phillips.

Goats, sheep, bullocks, fowls, rice, fruit, flowers, beer, the berries from the jungle, a head of Indian corn from the field, or even a handful of earth; all are acceptable to the Great Mountain, who is, in a sense lower than a Christian understands by the epithet, but still in a high sense, the Common Father of the people. It was he who divinely instituted worship, who has journeyed with the race from its primitive home, shared its defeats and flights, and still remains with it, the symbol of the Everlasting and Unchangeable One.

The Great Mountain forms the most perfect type of the household god. He was the object adored by the first family, then by the first community of families or village, then by the first tribe, and so by degrees by the whole race. He exhibits the ultimate result of a religion constructed on the family basis—the father of gods and men in a Pantheon of Lares.

As in religions of the Aryan type, the Santal system has a tendency to divide the Supreme God into a triad, one of whom is an abstract conception, while the other two represent the male and female principles. The Great Mountain represents neither man nor woman, but the life-sustaining providence necessary for the existence of either. He has a brother and a sister, who are worshipped by the priests with libations—also with white goats and fowls of a particular colour upon the banks of the Damooda—but who occupy an inferior position to the Great Mountain, and are almost unknown in

the forest. The brother's name is Maniko, who is to the Santal race what Manu in the abstract is to the Sanskrit—to wit, the First Male. He is the husband as well as brother of the female deity in the triad, Jaher-era, the first female, and the Santals derive their word for irregular connections between the sexes from the unconsecrated espousal of their first parents: thus *jaher-ete*, to take or live with a woman as a concubine, that is, without the sanction of marriage, even as Maniko took Jaher-era.

The worship of the Great Mountain is essentially a worship of blood. If the sacrificer cannot afford an animal, it is with a red flower or a red fruit that he approaches the divinity. When the English first obtained possession of the Beerbhoom mountains, human sacrifices were common, and a regular trade was carried on to supply the victims. If they are practised now, it is in the depths of the jungle, and with that impenetrable secrecy which enabled the Santals to sacrifice bullocks to the same god in the days of the Hindu rajahs. The Santal baffles the curious with indirect answers; and the most that can be got out of him is, 'How can we sacrifice men? In these days men are dear; who could pay their price?'

There can be little doubt that this sanguinary aboriginal deity is the Rudra of ancient Sanskrit literature, and the Siva of the mixed Hindu population which now occupies the plains.[29] The worship of both is in so many respects alike, that the

[29] Original Sanskrit Texts, ii. 437.

less observant sort of travellers generally identify them; and one of the missionaries who has laboured for some time among the hill-men, and whose reports form part of the materials on which this chapter is based, habitually denotes the blood-loving god of the Santals, Siva or Mahadeva. There are indications in the Veda, held to be more or less distinct by different scholars, of the struggle of the aboriginal deity for admission into the Aryan Olympus, and indeed a faint tradition survives of his first entrance into that august convention. 'The gods went to heaven,' says an ancient text; 'they asked Rudra (Siva), "Who art thou?"'[30] The stranger declares that he is the one supreme god, which indeed he was among the aborigines; and as the Romans identified their Etruscan deities with those of Greece, so Rudra (Siva) took his seat in the assembly of Aryan gods, not as a new-comer, but as another form of Agni, one of the most ancient of the Indo-Germanic divinities. This identification, however, was not accomplished all at once; so that while the Aryan priests of one part of the conquered country chanted, 'Reverence to the Rudra, who is in Agni, who is in the waters, who has entered the plants and bushes, who has formed these worlds;'[31] the Aryan priests of another part, where the identification had not completely taken place, adored Rudra and Agni as distinct gods.[32]

30 Original Sanskrit Texts, iv. 298.
31 Atharva Veda, vii. 87, 1.
32 *Id.* viii. 5-10; Texts, iv.

The early Sanskrit theologians distinctly comprehended this, and stated very truly, that among different nations in India the Supreme God passed by different names, but that this god was to be understood to be the same as the original Sanskrit deity Agni. 'Agni is a god,' says an ancient text. 'These are his names: Sarva, as the Eastern people call him; Bhava, as the Bahikas (call him); Pasunampati (Lord of Beasts), Rudra, and Agni. All these names except Agni are ungentle,' probably meaning that they represented the god in his sanguinary form, as worshipped by the aborigines. 'Agni is his gentlest appellation;' probably meaning that it represents the god in the beneficent character in which he was known to the Aryan conquerors.[33]

Without accepting Signor Gorresio's views of the Hametic origin of the aborigines, I think he has very well expressed the process by which the aboriginal deity entered the Sanskrit Pantheon. 'It appears to me that in this fact,' that is the interruption of Daxa's sacrifice, 'the struggle of the ancient religions of India is represented under a mythical veil. Siva—a deity, as I believe, of the Cush or Hametic tribes, which preceded on the soil of India the Aryan or Indo-Sanskrit race—wished to have part in the worship of the conquerors, and in their sacrifices, from which he was excluded; and by disturbing their rites, and by a display of violence at their sacrifices, he succeeded.

[33] Satapatha Brahmanam, i. 7, 3, 8. Texts, iv.

in being admitted to partake in them.'[34] In another place Signor Gorresio speaks of Siva as the deity 'who entered into the Indo-Sanskrit Olympus by one of those religious syncretisms of which traces are so frequently to be found in the ancient systems of worship.'

The Siva of the present day has his most favoured abodes among those solemn phenomena of nature, of which the god of the Santals, the Great Mountain, is the type. As before mentioned, thousands of Hindus annually resort to his temple among the Western Highlands of Beerbhoom; and a curious proof of the identity of Siva with the aboriginal deity is, that the shrine traces its origin to a Santal, and is called by the name of a Santal to this day. The hills among which it is built were regarded during ages with peculiar veneration by the aboriginal tribes; and notwithstanding that the Brahmans have now completely ousted them from the temple, and called the *genius loci* by a Hindu name, the feeling is still so strong as to make a learned missionary question whether these mountains are not the *cunabula* of the Santal race. The Brahmans who minister at the holy place indignantly deny the connection of the Siva whom they worship with the national god of the aborigines by whom they are surrounded, and try to rebut the lasting testimony which the very name of their temple gives against them by an improbable fable.

In the old time, they say, a band of Brahmans

[34] Remarks on Ramayana, ix. 291, note 35. Texts, iv. 349.

settled on the banks of the beautiful highland lake beside which the Holy City stands. Around them there was nothing but the forest and mountains, in which dwelt the black races. The Brahmans placed the symbol of their god Siva near the lake, and did sacrifice to it; but the black tribes would not sacrifice to it, but came. as before, to the three great stones[35] which their fathers had worshipped, and which are to be seen at the western entrance of the Holy City to this day. The Brahmans, moreover, ploughed the land, and brought water from the lake to nourish the soil; but the hill-men hunted and fished as of old, or tended their herds, while their women tilled little patches of Indian corn. But in process of time the Brahmans, finding the land good, became slothful, giving themselves up to lust, and seldom calling on their god Siva. This the black tribes, who came to worship the great stones, saw and wondered at more and more, till at last one of them, by name Byju, a man of a mighty arm, and rich in all sorts of cattle, became wroth at the lies and wantonness of the Brahmans, and vowed he would beat the symbol of their god Siva with his club every day before touching food.

35 'Three huge monoliths of contorted gneiss rock, of great beauty. Two are vertical, and the third is laid upon the heads of the two uprights as a horizontal beam. These massive stones are twelve feet in length, each weighing upwards of seven tons. They are quadrilateral, each face being two feet six inches, or ten feet round each stone. The horizontal beam is retained in its place by mortise and tenon. By whom or when these ponderous stones were erected, no one knows.'—Revenue Survey Report by Captain W. S. Sherwill, p. 6. 4to, Calcutta.

This he did; but one morning his cows strayed into the forest, and after seeking them all day, he came home hungry and weary, and having hastily bathed in the lake, sat down to his supper. Just as he stretched out his hand to take the food, he called to mind his vow; and, worn out as he was, he got up, limped painfully to the Brahman's idol on the margin of the lake, and beat it with his club. Then suddenly a splendid form, sparkling with jewels, rose from the waters, and said: 'Behold the man who forgets his hunger and his weariness to beat me, while my priests sleep with their concubines at home, and neither give me to eat nor to drink. Let him ask of me what he will, and it shall be given.' Byju answered, 'I am strong of arm and rich in cattle. I am a leader of my people; what want I more? Thou art called *Nath* (Lord); let me too be called Lord, and let thy temple go by my name.' 'Amen,' replied the deity; 'henceforth thou art not Byju, but Byjnath, and my temple shall be called by thy name.'

So close is the resemblance between the Great Mountain of the Santals and the Siva of the mixed Hindu population, that several natives, without any previous study of the question, and judging only from the attributes and visible worship, translated the Santal name for their god as 'the Mahadeva (*i.e.* Siva) of the Hindus.'

In a preceding chapter I have stated that the religion of the present mixed Hindu population bears witness to the influence of the aboriginal

element. I have now reviewed the religion of the aborigines as practised among the mountaineers of Beerbhoom, and I think it may safely be concluded that the Hindus have borrowed their household god[36] and its secret rites from the primitive races whom they enslaved; that they have borrowed their village gods,[37] with the ghosts and demons that haunt so many trees; and finally, that they have borrowed the sanguinary deity (Siva) who is now universally adored by the lower orders throughout Bengal. Among the Hindus these various superstitions are isolated, scattered, unconnected with each other; among the Santals they stand forth as the natural, inevitable gradations in the mythology of a race which bases its worship, as it bases its whole social organization, on the family, the political unit of patriarchal times.

Mysteriously connected with the worship of Siva is Buddhism. How the monotheistic element in Sanskrit faith revolted against the material and polytheistic tendency, Professor Müller's charming works have made familiar to the general reader. But the subsequent fate of the reformation, how it was extinguished after no long interval in the centres of Brahmanism, and fled to the north, the east, and the south, shedding new light among the lapsed races of India, and ultimately reaching the confines of the Asiatic world, are to this day matters of recondite scholarship. Driven forth from the Sanskrit kingdom of Oudh, Buddhism conquered for

[36] The Shal-gram. [37] The Gram-devatas.

itself the mountains and valleys of the Lower Provinces; won the hearts of their semi-aboriginal population; and founded shrines or holy cities in every district, from Sarnath,[38] beyond the northern boundary of Bengal Proper, to Jaggarnath, which is washed by the ocean on the extreme south. It consolidated scattered tribes into a powerful confederacy, under a religious dynasty[39] which waged not unsuccessful war upon the kingdom whence the reformation had been expelled, and which, in the ruins of Gour, has left monuments of its greatness that neither time nor the change in the course of the Ganges can efface.

Buddhist relics abound in every one of the western districts of Lower Bengal; and wherever they are most numerous, there the worship of Siva has at present the strongest hold on the people. It is curious to note, moreover, that many of the Buddhist figures in Lower Bengal have flat or irregular noses and thick lips, such as are never seen among the Sanskrit-speaking races, but which precisely correspond with the Sanskrit accounts of the aborigines, and which at this day are the most marked features in the physiognomy of the Santals of Beerbhoom as contrasted with the Brahman of the plains. The artists who cut these statues, now half-buried in the ground, were aborigines; the men and women from whom they took their idea of the human face were aborigines: they could only

38 Near the modern Benares.

39 The Pal Rajahs, who succeeded Gajanta.

have been objects of veneration in communities in which the aboriginal element predominated; and when the next wave of Aryans flooded Lower Bengal, these flat-nosed, thick-lipped statues were treated with the same contempt as the aboriginal races whose effigies they were.

The legends of the ancient Sarnath distinctly preserve the struggle between the two religions. First the seat of aboriginal or Siva worship, then converted to Buddhism by the king of Lower Bengal, finally reconquered to Hinduism by the Canouj Brahmans, and reduced to ashes, its history and even its name have become matters of speculation among native scholars, who find, with surprise, a plain allusion to Siva-worship in the very name of the northern Buddhist metropolis.[40] Close by the Holy City, among the mountains of Beerbhoom, the only spot in those secluded highlands where Siva-worship exists, we find unmistakeable Buddhist remains. The same close connection between Buddhism and Siva-worship appears in Southern India.[41] Everywhere the Buddhist religion was overpowered, and immediately succeeded by the worship of the sanguinary aboriginal deity who in ancient times fought his way into the Aryan Olympus.

The philosophical relation of Siva-worship to Buddhism is beyond the humble scope of a rural annalist; but no one can study the minute local

[40] A recent account of Sarnath, by a Hindu antiquary, appeared in the *Englishman's Weekly Journal*, vol. iv. No. 29. 4to, Calcutta.

[41] Major Syke's Report on the Land Tenures of the Dekkan.

history of Bengal Proper without finding memorials of the process by which the actual change was effected. The Buddhist fugitives from persecution in the north appear as kings in the Lower Valley, in part converting, in part conquering, the aboriginal tribes. Indeed, there are indications that the Buddhists owed their easy victories, in no small degree, to the circumstance that they presented themselves in Lower Bengal as the deliverers of the classes of aboriginal descent from the tyranny and prædial slavery which the preceding waves of Aryans had imposed. The religion of the earlier Aryan invaders was a positive one, favouring social inequalities, and interfering with the practical life of the people: the Buddhist religion was a negative one, declaring equality between man and man, and secluding itself as much as possible from practical life. Buddhism, therefore, was a great gain to the semi-aboriginal masses of Lower Bengal, and quickly obtained their allegiance. But a negative religion, though it may be the creed of a dynasty, is never the religion of a people. Buddhism quickly lost its active principle in Lower Bengal, and retreated to monasteries or to secluded religious villages among the mountains, such as the Holy City in Beerbhoom; content with having placed a Buddhist dynasty on the throne, and with having spread a thin crust of monotheism over the surface of society. The common people were also satisfied; they were let alone. They naturally returned to the bloody worship of their fathers, which the preceding Aryans

had tried to trample out, and Lower Bengal soon exhibited the inevitable consequence of forcing a higher degree of spiritualism upon a nation than it is able to bear; to wit, an untold depth of superstition varnished over with a fair, deceitful gloss. Such a state of affairs could not be permanent: as Buddhism retired from public life to its monastic solitudes, Brahmanism crept back into its place, and at last drove it forth altogether. But of Brahmanism there are always two sides, the spiritual and the idolatrous; the former represented by the merciful worship of Vishnu, the latter by the bloody rites of Siva, the aboriginal Rudra. Brahmanism had learned wisdom in disgrace; it had learned that nowhere, not even in Bengal, can a dynasty be lasting which sets its face against the people. Instead, therefore, of again introducing their old esoteric religion, with its sublime dogmas and unbloody sacrifices of fruits, milk, and oil, the Brahmans threw themselves upon the people, and preached the popular side of their creed; with the popular deity Siva or Rudra at its head, to be worshipped according to the popular bloody rites. This was precisely the religion for the semi-aboriginal population of Lower Bengal. The mass of superstition that had always existed, and still everywhere exists, in Buddhist countries, upheaved, splintering into a thousand fragments the thin crust of monotheism that had concealed it. From that period modern Hinduism dates, with its top reaching even to the heavens, and its feet descending into the lowest

depths of man's depraved heart. Only in Lower Bengal is its baser form a homogeneous and strictly national religion; for only in Lower Bengal did the Brahmans, deliberately rejecting the spiritual side of the Sanskrit faith, identify themselves with the semi-aboriginal superstitions of the masses. Go where he chooses, the Hindu of the Lower Valley is known by his gross materialism and bloody rites. Native scholars, who look only to the facts without troubling themselves with the reasons, are astonished that the Lower Provinces, the refuge of monotheism a thousand years ago, should now be the focus of idolatry. 'Bengal,' says an eminent antiquarian, himself a native of the Southern Valley, 'long influenced by Buddhism, has lapsed into Brahmanism with a vengeance. The Bengali carries idolatry wherever he goes. Alexander left cities to mark the track of his conquests; the Bengali leaves idols to mark the tide of his peregrinations. It is English enterprise to set up schools and found hospitals; it is Bengali enterprise to erect temples and put up idols. The Englishman teaches the Bengali to bridge rivers and open railroads; the Bengali teaches hook-swinging to the Santal,[42] and idol-making to the north-country Hindu. The Bengali who set up the image of Durga' (the wife of the aboriginal deity Siva) 'at Cawnpore, is said to have brought artisans from Calcutta, because in the north country they knew not how to make an idol riding upon a lion with ten arms.'[43]

[42] The Charrak-puja, now made a criminal offence.
[43] *Englishman's Weekly Journal*, vol. iv. No. 32. 4to, Calcutta.

Caste is unknown among the Santals. Each of the seven children of our first parents founded a tribe; and, generally speaking, where the Santals are free from Hinduizing influences, the number of tribes remains unaltered to this day. The descendants of the first-born son are the Nij-kasda-had; of the second-born, Nij-murmu-had; of the third-born, Nij-saran-had; of the fourth-born, Nij-hasdi-had; of the fifth-born, Nij-marudi-had, whom the first parents appointed to offer sacrifice to the Great Mountain; of the sixth-born, Nij-kesku-had; of the seventh-born, Nij-tadu-had. The prefix Nij appears to signify 'the son of,' like 'Mac' or 'Fitz,' and is dropped in ordinary conversation. Each of these tribes is complete in itself, furnished with its own leaders, and producing classes; but two of the tribes have more especially devoted themselves to religion, and furnish a large majority of the priests. One of these represents the state religion, founded on the family basis, and administered by the descendants of the fifth son, the original family priest. Many of this tribe enjoy little grants of rent-free land in return for religious services at public festivals in the grove, where the gods of the hamlet dwell together. In some places, particularly in the north, the descendants of the second son (Nij-murmu-had) are held to make better priests than those of the fifth; but it is noticeable that they rarely receive grants of land and have to support themselves by their own labour or the liberality of their devotees. They are for the most part prophets, diviners, and

officiating Levites of forest or other shrines, representing demon-worship; and in only a few places do they take the place of the fifth tribe, as the hierarchy of the national system of religion founded on the family. In the north, where Hinduism has made the greatest inroads, five tribes have been added,—arising, I believe, from the illegitimate descendants of Santal women by Aryan fathers. They are to the pure Santals what the mixed castes are to the pure Aryans; but the superior intelligence, derived from their fathers, has enabled them to obtain a much better position among their aboriginal kinsmen than the mixed castes have ever acquired among the Aryan conquerors of the plains. The subject of these additional five tribes, however, is involved in much obscurity, and this view of their origin is rather a conjecture than a deduction from known facts. In the north, the Santals have gone so near to Hinduism as to assign particular occupations to four of the tribes. Thus the Kesku-had are the kings; the Murmu-had are the priests; the Saran-had are the soldiers; the Marudi-had are the farmers: evidently a clumsy imitation of the fourfold Hindu division into soldiers, priests, traders, and artisans. Besides these four tribes, the northern Santals have eight others, to whom no particular occupation is assigned.

Notwithstanding such local affectations of caste, the cruel inequalities which divide man from man among the Hindus of the plain have never penetrated the hamlets of the mountaineers. The whole

village has its joys and sorrows in common. It works together, hunts together, worships together, and on festivals eats together. Instead of each tribe having to marry within itself, as in the case of the Hindu castes, no man is allowed to take a wife of his own clan. The first three castes of the Hindus are in reality based upon difference of occupation or social rank; and the marriage of a knight's daughter with the son of a tradesman, used to be as abhorrent to the Aryan race in feudal Europe, as it ever was to the same race in agricultural India. The fourth caste of the Hindus were the conquered black races, and we know how New Orleans society would have regarded the nuptials of a planter's daughter with a negro slave. The classification of the Santals depended not upon social rank or occupation, but upon the family basis. Every Santal feels he is the kinsman of the whole race; and the only difference he makes between his own clan and the others is, that he thinks the relationship between himself and his clanswomen too close to permit of intermarriage. The children belong to the father's clan, and the daughters, upon marriage, give up their ancient clan and its gods for those of their husbands.

So strong is the family feeling, that expulsion from the clan is the only form of banishment known. Like the Roman *aquæ et ignis interdictio*, to which it bears a strange resemblance, it amounts to loss of civil rites, for other clans will not receive the outcast; and the idea of the ties of kindred being destroyed between the individual and the race, is

insupportable to the Santal. The terrors of the punishment, however, are decreased by its frequency, and a door is always left open for the return of the offender to the common family. He must first be publicly reconciled with the people; and the difficulty of effecting the reconcilation depends upon the view which public opinion takes of his crime. For minor offences, twenty gallons of beer,[44] and about ten shillings to buy the materials of a feast for his clansmen, suffice; in more heinous cases, the difficulty of reconciliation is so great, that the unfortunate man yields to his destiny, and, taking with him his bow and arrows, departs into the jungle, whence he never returns. A woman, once fallen, cannot regain her position.

The six great ceremonies in a Santal's history are: admission into the family; admission into the tribe; admission into the race; union of his own tribe with another by marriage; formal dismission from the living race by incremation; lastly, re-union with the departed fathers. The admission into the family, like the worship of the household god, is a secret rite, and differs in different localities. One form of it consists in the father repeating to himself the name of the ancestral deity, and putting his hand on the child's head as an acknowledgment that it is his own. The admission into the tribe is a more public ceremony, called *nartha*, and takes place three days after the birth, if a girl; five days after the birth, if a boy. By this time the Santal

[44] Rice beer, worth from 1d. to 3d. a gallon, according to its strength.

mother is able to go about her work again. Great pots of beer are brewed, the clansmen on both sides of the house are invited; but as the Santals hold a family in which a birth has taken place unclean, none will eat or drink with it until the ceremonies of purification have been performed. The child's head is shaved. The clansmen stand round and sip water mingled with a bitter vegetable juice,[45] in token of their commiseration for their temporarily outcast relatives. The father then solemnly names the child, if a boy, after his own father; if a girl, after his wife's mother; and the midwife, immediately on hearing the word, takes rice and water, and, going round the circle of relatives, fillips a few drops on the breast of each visitor, calling out the child's name. The family, including the new-born babe, is then held to be re-admitted into the clan; and the ceremony ends with the kinsmen of both father and mother sitting down to huge earthen pitchers of beer, to which a feast in rich households is added.

The admission into the race takes place about the fifth year. Beer is brewed; the friends of the family, whatever may be their clan, are invited; and the child is marked on his right arm with the Santal spots. The number of these spots varies, but it is always an uneven one; and any man dying without them becomes an object for the wrath of the Santal gods. He lies age after age, with snakes burrowing in his breast, an outcast from the ghostly

[45] *Nim.*

world, amid which the Santal lives, and moves, and has his being.

The union of his own tribe with another by marriage[46] is the most important ceremony in a Santal's life. It takes place later than among the Hindus, and the Santal speaks with abhorrence of the practice of bringing together mere children, years before the espousals can be consummated. As a rule, a Santal lad marries about his sixteenth or seventeenth year; girls are generally provided for at fifteen. These ages may appear premature to nations with whom the luxuries of civilisation have become necessaries of life; but in the tropical forest, a youth of sixteen or seventeen is as able to provide for a family as ever he will be; and a leaf hut, with a few earthen or brazen pots, is all the establishment a Santal young lady expects. One generation after another settles down early to wedded life; nor is a custom to be blamed which renders unchastity almost unknown, and provides a numerous progeny of grandchildren to care for the aged. I have never, except in the famine of 1866, met a beggar in a Santal village.

As the Santals have attained an age of discretion before they marry, a freedom of selection is allowed to them, wholly unknown among the Hindus. The formal proceedings begin by the lad's father sending a wedding messenger (*rai bari*) to the girl's father, who receives the proffer in silence, and, after advising with his wife, replies: 'Let the

[46] Chhatiar.

youth and the maiden meet, then these things may be talked over.' An interview is arranged at a neighbouring fair; and at the close of the day, if the young people are pleased with each other, the lad's father buys a trifling present for the girl, who prostrates herself before him as a public acknowledgment that she is willing to be his daughter-in-law. The girl's clansmen then visit the lad's village, where the future husband salutes them with a kiss, taking each of them on his knees for a minute,[47] and giving the brethren a small present of money, but to the girl's father a turban and the customary cotton dress. The lad's clansmen afterwards visit the house of the girl's father. The bride-elect salutes them, takes each on her knee,[48] and makes a small present precisely as the lad had done to her people. The clans by these ceremonies having formally declared their amity and goodwill, the lad's father sends a present of an uneven number of rupees by the wedding messenger to the girl's parents, the acceptance of which legally transfers the girl to the new clan. Preparations for the actual wedding then begin. The bride's clansmen erect a temporary shed in their village, and soon afterwards the bridegroom, attended by his kindred, comes into the little town, and all are solemnly received in the single street (*kul-ahi*, literally the Divider of the Families) by the two village beadles, whose duty

47 The Rev. E. L. Puscley, of the Rajmahal country, is my authority for this curious part of the ceremony

48 *Id.*

it is to see after the youth of the hamlet. The groomsmen then proceed to the shed, in which they erect a bough of the wine-giving tree,[49] and place under it a pot of rice, husked by the girl's family in a particular manner, steeped in water and coloured with a red dye. The purification of the bridegroom follows. He is bathed, his hair dressed, the old clothes are taken from him, and new ones stained with vermilion put on by the girl's clanswomen. On the fifth day, the bridegroom, arrayed in his new clothes, is carried on men's shoulders to the bride's house. Five of his groomsmen place the bride in a large basket, and bring forth her younger brother, who receives the bridegroom as her proxy. Salutations having been interchanged, the bride is carried out in her basket: the young couple sprinkle one another with water from the opposite sides of a cloth that has been put between them; the bridegroom calls out the name of a god, and the people tell him to lift the girl out of the basket, for she is his wife. The clansmen then unite the clothes of the bride and bridegroom, after which the girl's clanswomen bring burning charcoal, pound it with the household pestle[50] in token of the dissolution of old family ties, and extinguish it with water to signify the final separation of the bride from her clan.

Nothing can be more picturesque than the torch-light procession home. The party first assemble at the leafy shed before mentioned, to inspect the pot

49 The *Muhua*. 50 The *tok*, a stick of the okli tree.

of rice and vermilion-coloured water. If the grain has germinated abundantly, there will be many children; if sparingly, there will be few; and if the seeds, instead of germinating, have rotted, the marriage is an ill-omened one. The procession then moves forward with drums and fifes, the torches blazing luridly under the forest trees, and startling many a bird, which whirs screaming into the darkness. As it draws near to the bridegroom's village, the virgins[51] come forth about two miles to welcome the bride, and conduct her with song and music to the door of her new home.

The Santals remain faithful to one wife. Second marriages are not unknown, but they seldom take place, except for the purpose of obtaining an heir, and a Santal always honours the wife of his youth as the head of his house. Divorce is rare, and can only be effected with the consent of the husband's clansmen. Five of the nearest relatives are called together, beer is brewed, and the party who desires the separation explains his or her wrongs. The relatives, after hearing the rejoinder, decide. In the event of the divorce being granted, the party seeking it solemnly tears up a leaf before the little court.

The fifth great ceremony in a Santal's history is his formal dismission from the race. When a Santal lies a-dying, the *ojha*, half necromancer and half doctor, rubs oil on a leaf to discover what witch or demon has 'eaten' the sick man. As soon as the

[51] The *titri kuri*.

vital spark quits the body, the corpse is anointed with oil tinged with red herbs, and laid decently out in new white clothes upon the bed. The clansmen join together to buy two little brazen vessels—one for rice, the other for water—which they place upon the couch along with a few rupees, to enable their friend to appease the demons on the threshold of the shadowy world. When the funeral pile is ready, these presents are removed. Five clansmen bear out the corpse, carrying it three times round the pile, and then lay it gently down upon the top. A cock[52] is nailed through the neck by a wooden pin, to a corner of the pile or to a neighbouring tree. The next of kin prepares a torch of grass bound with thread from his own clothes, and after walking three times round the pile in silence, touches the mouth of the deceased with the brand. This he does with averted face. The friends and kindred then close in, and, all facing the south, set fire to the pile. When the body is nearly consumed, the clansmen extinguish the fire, and the nearest relative breaks off three fragments from the half-calcined skull, washes them in new milk coloured with red herbs, and places them in a small earthen vessel.

Of a future life of blessedness the Santal has no idea. His strong natural sense of justice teaches him that the unrighteous and prosperous man upon

[52] The *Cock* is the animal generally sacrificed by the aboriginal races of Ceylon in cases of mortal sickness.—Sir E. Tennent's Ceylon, i. 541, etc., 3d ed.

earth will meet with retribution after death; but his future life is a life of punishment for the wicked, without any compensating rewards for the good. The absence of abstract nouns renders it difficult to get at his real views on these subjects; but the most intelligent I have met, seemed to think that uncharitable men and childless women were eaten eternally by worms and snakes, while good men entered into fruit-bearing trees. The common Santal's ideas are much looser. He believes that ghosts and demons surround him, who will punish him in the body unless he appease them; but who these ghosts may be he knows not, and after death all is a blank.

One ceremony, a very beautiful one, remains—the re-union of the dead with the fathers. The next of kin, taking a bag of rice and the little earthen pot with the three fragments of the skull, starts off alone to the sacred river. Arrived at its bank, he places the three fragments of skull on his own head, and entering the stream, dips completely under the water, at the same time inclining forwards, so that the three fragments fall into the current, and are carried down, thus 'uniting the dead with the fathers.'

The Santals afford a striking proof of how a race takes its character from the country in which it lives. Those who have studied them only in the undulating southern country near the sea, call them a purely agricultural nation; the missionaries who have preached to them in the mountainous

jungles look upon them as a tribe of fishers and hunters; in the highlands of Beerbhoom, they appear as a people with no particular occupation, living as best they can in a sterile country by breeding buffaloes, cultivating patches of Indian corn, and eking out a precarious semi-agricultural semi-pastoral existence by the products of the forest. The jungle, indeed, is their unfailing friend. It supplies them with everything that the lowland Hindus have not. Noble timber, brilliant dyes, gums, bees' wax, vegetable drugs, charms, charcoal, and the skins of wild animals—a little world of barbaric wealth, to be had for the taking. Throughout the cold weather, long lines of their buffalo carts —the wheels made from a single slice of Sal trunk —are to be seen toiling and creaking towards the fairs of lowland Beerbhoom. At night the Santal is at no loss for a tent; he looses his buffaloes on the margin of some wayside tank, creeps under his cart, lights a fire at one end, draws up a second cart with its solid wheel against the other, and after a heavy supper, sings himself to sleep.

As a huntsman, he is alike skilful and intrepid. He never stirs without his bow and arrows. The bow consists of a strong mountain bamboo which no Hindu lowlander can bend. His arrows are of two kinds: heavy, sharp ones for the larger kind of game; and light ones, with a broad knob at the point, for small birds. The difficulty of shooting true with the latter can only be appreciated by those who have tried it; but few English sports-

men, provided with the latest improvement in fire-arms, can show a better bag of small game from the jungle than the Santal, equipped solely with his rude weapon. Fowling, however, he only resorts to in order to meet his immediate necessities. I have seen a wayside encampment of Santals, after toiling along the road the whole day, supply themselves with water-birds from the tank at which they drew up for the night, in less time than a Hindu would take to purify himself, or a Mussulman traveller to say his prayers.

The tiger or leopard hunt is at once his pastime and his profit. If he looks to the gain, he keeps the existence of the animal a secret from every one, except the fortunate kinsman who possesses a gun, and stealthily watches what drinking-place the wild beast frequents. This ascertained, the two relatives take up their position in an adjoining tree, and patiently wait, sometimes for days, the coming of their prey. The long-barrelled matchlock, loaded with a charge of coarse, slow-burning powder, enough to serve for a small piece of ordnance, and rammed down with pebbles and scraps of iron, is placed in position; the smouldering rope, which serves as tinder, is blown into a glow; and if the unconscious animal takes a long enough draught for all these performances to be gone through, that drink is his last one. The Santal never fires on mere chance. The *prestige* of his matchlock, possibly the only one within thirty miles, must not be lightly risked; and his powder, coarse as it is, has

to be brought from the Hindu village on the plains, which he dreads to approach. If the hunt be for pastime, the Santal prefers driving a tiger to shooting it. An Englishman has only to give out that he will beat a certain jungle, and hundreds of Santals, headed by their drummers and fife-players, seem to rise out of the ground. I have seen five hundred collected on two days' notice. The jungle was divided into circles, in the centre of each of which the Santals set up high wooden erections,[53] something like pulpits, but covered with foliage, to look like trees, for the English hunters. The highlanders, armed with bows and arrows, surrounded the circumference in silence; and after ascertaining by preconcerted cries, not to be distinguished from the call of wild birds, that this manœuvre was accomplished, they raised a universal yell, accompanied by countless drums, fifes, and cymbals. As they draw closer to the centre the sport becomes exciting, the beaters displaying the most admirable courage and reliance on one another whenever the game attempts to break, and striking down all the small fry they fall in with. The Englishmen on the erections in the middle refrain from firing at inferior animals, lest the report should terrify the greater ones, that may be behind, into breaking through the gradually contracting circle. As tigers and leopards are now scarce, it sometimes happens that the gentlemen in the pulpits, with their well-

[53] *Maichans*, from the same root as the Greek MAKHINE, or our own *machine*.

appointed batteries, do not get a single shot, while the beaters are laden with booty, and form themselves into a triumphant procession, each having a hare or a bird, or at least a good-sized snake, to show for his day's work.

That the Santal was at no distant period an agriculturist, his language and festivals clearly prove. When driven from the open lowlands, he wrings an existence from the forest; but he carries with him a taste for agriculture, and no mean skill in its details. The agriculture of the Hindu lowlanders has a stately language derived from the Sanskrit, not a word of which is to be found in Santali; but it has also a humble, unwritten speech current among the poorer cultivators, who have adopted many of their terms from the aborigines. The Santal owes nothing of his skill in husbandry to the Aryan. He has crops of his own,[54] implements of his own, his own system of cultivation, and an abundant vocabulary of rural life, not one word of which he has borrowed from the superior race who ousted him from his heritage in the valley. Upon low-lying ground near the sea he cultivates rice as successfully as his Hindu neighbours, and if not oppressed by them, becomes a substantial man.

[54] The staple food of the Beerbhoom highlanders is Indian corn (Santali, janora), and three small inferior grains called janhe, gundoli, and iri, which I have not seen cultivated by the lowland Hindus. The Beerbhoom Santal looks upon rice, the universal food of the lowlanders, as a rare luxury; but he successfully rears the small hardy barley (bajra) which is common throughout Bengal. In the southern country, the word *janhe* is used to designate a wild grass.

As the lowland population advances, however, he recedes, so that few large villages and no Santal cities grow up. The missionaries everywhere remark the Santal's 'decided preference for the new and jungly parts of the country.' Rice, the most bountiful gift of nature to man, is the national crop of the Santal: his earliest traditions refer to it; his language overflows with terms to express its different stages;[55] and even in the forest he never wholly loses his hereditary skill in raising it. Each period in its cultivation is marked by a festival. The Santal rejoices and sacrifices to his gods when he commits the seed to the ground (the Ero-Sim festival); when the green blade has sprouted (the Harian Sim); when the ear has formed (the Horo); and the gathering of the rice crop forms the occasion of the crowning festival of the year (Johorai).[56]

The Santal possesses a happy disposition, is hospitable to strangers, and sociable to a fault among his own people. Every occasion is seized upon for a feast, at which the absence of luxuries is compensated for by abundance of game, and

[55] The Santal has names of his own for every stage in rice cultivation. (1.) The generic name for rice: Bengali, *dhan;* Santali, *horo.* (2.) The seed: Bengali, *bij* or *bich;* Santali, *ita.* (3.) Cut rice: Bengali, *kata;* Santali, *ir;* hence *irate*, to reap. (4.) Rice-straw: Bengali, *bichali;* Santali, *bassup.* (5.) Threshed rice: Bengali, *mara;* Santali, *en-men* or *ma-enmen.* (6.) Husked rice: Bengali, *chal*, from the same root as the Santali *chaoli*, from *chalate*, to sift. (7.) Boiled rice: Bengali, *bhat*, Santali, *dakku.* (8.) Fermented rice liquor: Bengali, *mad* or *pachwai;* Santali, *handia.* I have taken down these words as pronounced by Dhula Maji and Chandra Maji, two Santal constables in the Beerbhoom police.

[56] For a list of Santal festivals, see Appendix I.

liquor made from fermented rice. In the southern country each house has its 'stranger's seat' outside the door, to which the traveller, whatever be his creed or colour, is courteously invited as soon as he enters the village. The Santal has a form of salutation of his own. He does not abase himself to the ground like the rural Hindu, but gravely raises his hands to his forehead, and then stretches them out towards the stranger, till the palms touch each other.[57] He keeps his respect chiefly for the aged among his own people; and in dealings with outsiders, while courteous and hospitable, he is at the same time firm and free from cringing. Unlike the Hindu, he never thinks of making money by a stranger, scrupulously avoids all topics of business, and feels pained if payment is pressed upon him for the milk and fruits which his wife brings out. When he is at last prevailed upon to enter upon business matters, his dealings are offhand; he names the true price at first, which a lowlander never does, and politely waives all discussion or beating down. He would much rather that strangers did not come to his village; but when they do come, he treats them as honoured guests. He would in a still greater degree prefer to have no dealings with his guests; but when his guests introduce the subject, he deals with them as honestly as he would with his own people.

The village government is purely patriarchal. Each hamlet has an original founder (the Manjhi-

[57] Johar-ete.

Hanan), who is regarded as the father of the community. He receives divine honours in the sacred grove, and transmits his authority to his descendants. The head-man for the time being (Manjhi) bears the undisputed sway which belongs to a hereditary governor; but he interferes only on great occasions, and leaves the details to his deputy (Paramanik). A missionary who has lived for some years among the Santals assures me that he has never seen an abuse of power by these authorities; and the chance traveller cannot help remarking the facility with which he can get food, guides, means of transport, in short, everything, by a word from the head-man. As the adults of the village have their head-man and his deputy, so also have the children. The juvenile community are strictly controlled by their own officers (the Jog-manjhi and Jog-paramanik), whose superintendence continues till the youth or maiden enters on the responsibilities of married life. A watchman completes the list of village officers, but among the pure Santals crime and criminal officers are almost unknown.[57a]

The Santal treats the female members of his family with respect, allows them to join in festivals, and only marks his superiority by finishing his meal before his wife begins. The Santal woman

[57a] For some years the Santal district adjoining Beerbhoom was administered on what was termed the 'No-Police System.' The Commissioner (Mr. G. W. Yule) speaks highly of it in his Civil and Criminal Report to Government for 1858 (pp. 4, 5, and 6), and the assistant Commissioners who had to carry out its practical details were of one opinion with regard to its success.

is modest, but frank. Ignorant of the shrinking squeamishness of the Hindu female, she converses intelligently with strangers, and performs the rites of hospitality to her husband's guests. Her dance is slow and decorous. All the women join hands, form themselves into an arc of a circle, and advance and retire towards the centre, where the musicians are placed, at the same time moving slightly towards the right, so as to complete the circle in about an hour.

The Santals live as much apart as possible from the Hindus. In some sequestered spot among the hills a field of paddy makes its appearance, and before the sportsman is aware, he comes upon a Santal village. The only Hindu they tolerate among them is a blacksmith, one of whom is attached to each village, and whose posterity in process of time become naturalized Santals. These men do all the working in iron for the hamlet, and fashion the armlets and other rude jewellery in which the Santal matron delights. In some places a small community of basket-weavers, a caste which forms the lowest extremity of Hindu society, or rather occupies a neutral ground of its own between the acknowledged Hindus and the aborigines, is permitted to settle on the outskirts of the Santal village; but these also soon become naturalized, and lose the diluted strain of Aryan blood they originally possessed. The hill-men are so simple-minded, that dealing with them is very profitable to the acute lowlander, who will pay large bribes to any person

whose influence can secure for him a footing among them. Under the protection of the village head, a Hindu shopkeeper or usurer sometimes finds his way into the Santals' retreats; and from that day, honesty, peace, and prosperity depart from the hamlet.

Until 1790, the Santals were the pests of the adjacent lowlands, and their unchecked inroads formed Lord Cornwallis' chief reason for assuming the direct administration of Beerbhoom. Every winter, as soon as they had gathered in the rice crop and celebrated their harvest-home, the whole nation moved down upon the plains, hunting in the forests and plundering the open country on the line of march. After three months' excellent sport they returned laden with booty to celebrate the February festival in their own villages. The operations which ultimately penned in the Santals within their own territory have already been detailed.[58] Gradually they learned to be content with the chase in their own forests as a winter pastime instead of the marauding expeditions upon the lowlands, and at the end of the century they appear in a new light—namely, as valuable neighbours to the lowland proprietors. The permanent settlement for the land-tax in 1790 resulted in a general extension of tillage, and the Santals were hired to rid the lowlands of the wild beasts which, since the great famine of 1769, had everywhere encroached upon the margin of cultivation. By this arrangement they combined sport

[58] *Ante*, Chap. ii.

with profit in a far greater degree than during their freebooting days, and gradually were induced to accept regular employment during the cold season on the plains. This circumstance was so noticeable as to find its way into the London papers, and from 1792 a new era in the history of the Santal dates.[59]

From that year he appears as the day-labourer of lowland Bengal. We have seen how the famines which attended the dissolution of the Mahommedan power destroyed the equilibrium between the population and the cultivable land. Whole districts had fallen out of tillage, and our first system, that of annual settlements for the land-tax which squeezed the industrious and improving proprietor to make good the default of the prodigal and idle one, rendered operations for reclaiming waste land on a large scale out of the question. But when, in 1790, the British Government pledged itself not to lay any further tax on reclaimed lands, capital quickly found its way to its natural destination in an agricultural country—to wit, the improvement of the soil. Every able-bodied husbandman was welcome to as many acres as he could cultivate. A large surplus of excellent land still remained, and the Santals, tempted down to the plains by unprecedented wages or easy rents, reclaimed hundreds of rural communes and gave a new land tenure to Beerbhoom. In the northern district of Rajmahal, Santals came

[59] 'Every proprietor is collecting husbandmen from the hills to improve his lowlands.'—*Morning Chronicle*, London, 23d Oct. 1792. O.C.

gradually further and further down the slopes; and Government wisely won them into peaceful habits, by grants of land, along with 'exemption from the ordinary course of law, and from all taxes.' 'Causes not affecting the public peace,' says an eye-witness in 1809, 'they settle among themselves by their own customs; but they are bribed by an annual pension to give up such as commit violent outrages, such as robbery and murder; and these are punished by the judge, provided an assembly of their countrymen finds them guilty.'[60]

By these measures did the British Government change invasion into immigration, and utilize a race that had been from time immemorial the terror of the western border of Bengal. The same tribes that had turned cultivated fields into a waste during Mussulmans' times, were destined to bring back the waste into cultivated fields under English rule.

The Santals, no longer thinned by the losses of the winter incursions, soon outgrew their sterile highlands, and about the year 1830 began to migrate northwards in large bodies. They found the northern hills inhabited by another aboriginal race, shorter, darker, fiercer, and more hostile to strangers than themselves; speaking a language they did not understand, and ignorant of the arts of peace. It was the race which, after defying the Mahommedan arms for centuries, was won over in 1780 by the truthful and gentle policy of Augustus

[60] Hist. Antiq., etc. of Eastern India, from the Buchanan MSS. ii. 82. Letters of Gurreeb Doss, with replies, 8vo, 1794. O. C.

Cleveland, on whose tomb the following words are engraved: 'Without bloodshed or the terrors of authority, employing only the means of conciliation, confidence, and benevolence, he attempted and accomplished the entire subjection of the lawless and savage inhabitants of the Jungle-Terry (forest frontier) of Rajmahal, who had long infested the neighbouring lands by their predatory incursions, inspired them with a taste of the arts of civilised life, and attached them to the British Government by a conquest over their minds—the most permanent as the most rational mode of dominion.'[61]

The more civilised Santal immigrants, finding no rest among these wild tribes, split up into wandering bands, and would probably have relapsed into savage life, but for a happy stroke of policy in 1832. The Hindus had never ceased to regard the old war-like hill-men as dangerous neighbours, and the fertile slopes remained an uninhabited neutral ground. In 1832 Government determined to mark off once and for all the territory of the highlanders by a ring fence of pillars built of solid masonry. The Hindus immediately pushed forwards the margin of cultivation towards the boundary; but the intervening valleys between the hills and the pillars remained unoccupied, the wild highlanders not caring, and the lowlanders not daring to till them. For this fertile country a population was wanted, and the Santals were discovered to be the very

[61] 'By order of the Governor-General and Council of Bengal, in honour of his character, and for an example to others,' 1784.

people required. Less timid than the Hindu, they were perfectly able to hold their own against their hill neighbours; fond of a semi-agricultural life in a thickly-wooded country and accustomed from childhood to clear jungle lands, the rich slopes were exactly the territory they had been long seeking in vain.[61a] The few hundreds who first settled on the land at a nominal rent found themselves so well off, that they sent for their kinsmen from among the southern hills, and before 1838 they had established forty villages, containing 3000 souls. What attracted the Santal even more than the virgin soil and well-stocked hunting-ground, was the circumstance that he could there preserve his nationality intact. Those who settled on the waste lands of Beerbhoom soon came to be regarded, both by the surrounding lowlanders and by their former highland kinsmen, as a low caste of Hindus. They lost their old customs, their religion and social institutions grounded on the family basis, with the equality between man and man which those institutions imply, and subsided into an insignificant caste of the great Hindu community. Indeed in the lowland village the Santal was regarded as a flesh-eating barbarian, and had to take his place in the lowest rank. But Hindus rarely penetrated the northern hill country inside the ring of pillars, and the Santal

61a Mr. John Petty Ward, of the Civil Service, may be considered the founder of this colony. The ring fence is 295 miles in circumference, containing 866 square miles of highland and 500 of lowland territory. Of the latter, 254 square miles had been reclaimed in 1851.

has there preserved his nationality to this day. The enclosure, therefore, became the favourite colony for the constantly overflowing Santals, and in 1847—less than twenty-five years from the time Mr. Ward erected the pillars—fifteen hundred Santal villages and townships, containing a population of about a hundred thousand souls, had sprung up within the ring. According to recent statistics, they now considerably exceed 200,000.

The Santal was destined not only to restore the equilibrium between the population and the cultivable land in the western lowlands, but also to become the means of rendering British enterprise possible throughout the whole of Bengal. During the past two generations, every Hindu, being able to obtain a little farm with a homestead of his own, naturally declined becoming the hired workman of foreign employers. The division of the population into capitalists and day-labourers did not take place; and when English capital sought investments in Bengal, it found the second element of production wanting. It had therefore, adapting itself to the condition of the country, to bribe the agriculturists to labour by means of advances,—a system unprofitable in itself, and apt to lead to great abuses. In process of time, moreover, the chief product of English enterprise—indigo—became an unpopular crop with the husbandman; and in some places the planter found that, in order to cultivate it, he must first get the whole surrounding population into his power by loans, or by pur-

chasing the land they tilled. During a quarter of a century, a large proportion of the indigo crop of Bengal was produced under pressure, not the less irksome because the husbandman had voluntarily subjected himself to it. From this unsatisfactory state of things the hill-men of the west afforded the means of escape. About 1835 Santals and kindred aboriginal tribes moved down in little bands towards the east, willing to work at anything that would yield them a living, but preferring agricultural employment where they could get it. In Western Bengal the hills and arid laterite clearly fix the limits of cultivation, and these limits had been reached. In the eastern districts the exuberant alluvial soil yet awaited the husbandman, and presently Santal villages sprang up on the margin of each secluded marsh and jungle. The system of exacting labour under pressure from the Hindu cultivators had always been disagreeable to most English gentlemen. It now became unnecessary, for the Santal immigrants afforded a population of day-labourers. Indigo-growing exactly suited the hill-man. It mainly consisted of agricultural operations; and it allowed him to work, according to his wont, by fits and starts, demanding that every sinew should be strained at certain seasons, and permitting of almost total idleness during others.

From personal observation both in the eastern and western districts of Lower Bengal, I am convinced that a deep, unceasing current of population still flows from the western highlands. Land is not

only more fertile, but also cheaper, in the east than the west. Meagre soil, requiring to be manured and artificially watered, and yielding only one crop in return, cannot be obtained in Beerbhoom at a less rent than nine shillings an acre. Excellent land in the eastern districts, yielding two crops a-year for the trouble of turning up the soil, could, until very recently, be had at seven or eight. In the latter districts, indeed, manuring and artificial irrigation are almost unknown. 'It does not appear to be generally known,' says a Calcutta newspaper, 'but it is indisputably the fact, that Eastern Bengal is at this moment being peopled by the spare population of the west.' In every part of Nuddea little communities of Santals, Dangars, or other hill-men, may be found living apart from the Hindus, and preserving their national customs in the middle of the lowland population. Many indigo factories in the eastern districts[62] have villages of these western highlanders. A family of them makes its appearance wherever manual labour is wanted, builds its leaf huts in a few days, and before the end of the month feels as much at home as if it were still among the mountains. Patient of labour, at home with nature, able to live on a penny a day, contented with roots when better food is not to be had, dark-skinned, a hearty but not habitually excessive toper, given to pig-hunting on holidays, despised by the Hindus, and heartily repaying their contempt, the hill-men of the west furnish the sinews by which

[62] The *Boona-parah.*

English enterprise is carried on in Eastern Bengal. Many of them come from the central highlands, where the population is permanently just one degree above absolute starvation, where the extension of tillage is only possible after a considerable outlay of capital in digging tanks, where the winters are severe, where cutaneous diseases and every infirmity common to half-starved hunting communities are rampant, and where the political disaffection which springs from a chronically hungry stomach is never unknown. They settle in a land where Nature has done her utmost to render unnecessary the toil of man, where good wages are always to be had in ready money, and where the very jungle produces as ample a subsistence as their little cultivated patches at home. Every winter, after the indigo is packed, numbers of the labourers visit their native villages, and seldom return unaccompanied with a train of poor relations, who look forward to the wages of the spring sowing season as the soldiers of Alaric contemplated the spoils of Lombardy.

The law of supply and demand operates in the long-run as effectively, although more tardily, in the valley of the Ganges as on the banks of the Mersey or the Clyde. In the western districts of Bengal the population have outgrown the land, and in the eastern they have not yet become equal to it.[63]

[63] The old rates for rice land in Nuddea were one shilling and sixpence per acre. In a large majority of rent suits that came before me in 1865, when in charge of the subdivision of Kooshtea, the rent of fair land was under six shillings per acre; and the highest rent claimed was, if I remember rightly, twelve shillings an acre for land

Labour, therefore, can make a better bargain with land and capital in the east than in the west; and the hill-races, uncivilised though they be, are sagacious enough to find out and frequent the districts where they can get the highest price for the one marketable article that Providence has given them—the work of their hands.

The Santal colony within the ring of masonry pillars in the north became, under the lenient treatment of the British Government, as safe and peace ful as any district of Lower Bengal. Hindu merchants flocked thither every winter after harvest to buy up the crop, and by degrees each market-town throughout the settlement had its resident Hindu grain-dealer. The Santal was ignorant and honest; the trading Hindu is keen and unscrupulous. Not a year passed without some successful shopkeeper returning from the hill-slopes to astonish his native town by a display of quickly-gotten wealth, and to buy land upon the plains. The Santal country came to be regarded by the less honourable orders of

naturally irrigated, and bearing two crops a year. Such land can hardly be obtained in Beerbhoom. The little there is of it is used for mulberry cultivation, and pays from twenty-four to forty-two shillings an acre. That a large surplus of land exists in the eastern districts, is proven by the prevalence of the Utbandi system, according to which the husbandman enters, without any previous arrangement with the proprietor, on the uncultivated land, takes as many crops off it as he can get, and deserts it for fresh fields at the end of the year. The proprietor measures the land thus cultivated when the crop is ripe, and charges the small rent of seven shillings and sixpence per acre. This represents the rent not only of the year during which the land is cruelly overcropped, but also of the succeeding one, during which it will in all probability lie fallow. Since 1865 I understand that rents have risen in Nuddea.

Hindus as a country where a fortune was to be made, no matter by what means, so that it was made rapidly. That the Hindus appear throughout their whole connection with the Santals as cheats, extortioners, and oppressors, tells neither more nor less disgracefully against the Hindu population in general, than the unscrupulous conduct of a few English adventurers would tell against the honour of the English nation. Along the skirt of the Santal country, from the ring-fenced colony on the north to the highland valleys of Beerbhoom, Hindu hucksters settled upon various pretences, and in a few years grew into men of fortune. They cheated the poor Santal in every transaction. The forester brought his jars of clarified butter for sale; the Hindu measured it in vessels with false bottoms: the husbandman came to exchange his rice for salt, oil, cloth, and gunpowder; the Hindu used heavy weights in ascertaining the quantity of grain, light ones in weighing out the articles given in return. If the Santal remonstrated, he was told that salt, being an excisable commodity, had a set of weights and measures peculiar to itself. The fortunes made by traffic in produce were augmented by usury. A family of new settlers required a small advance of grain to eke out the produce of the chase while they were clearing the jungle. The Hindu dealer gave them a few shillings' worth of rice, and seized the land as soon as they had cleared it and sown the crop. Another family, in a fit of hospitality, feasted away their whole harvest, and then opened an

account at the grain-dealer's, who advanced enough to keep them above starvation during the rest of the year. From the moment the peasant touched the borrowed rice, he and his children were the serfs of the corn merchant. No matter what economy the family practised, no matter what effort they made to extricate themselves; stint as they might, toil as they might, the Hindu claimed the whole crop, and carried on a balance to be paid out of the next harvest. Year after year the Santal sweated for his oppressor. If the victim threatened to run off into the jungle, the usurer instituted a suit in the courts, taking care that the Santal should know nothing of it till the decree had been obtained and execution taken out. Without the slightest warning, the poor husbandman's buffaloes, cows, and little homestead were sold, not omitting the brazen household vessels which formed the sole heirloom of the family. Even the cheap iron ornaments, the outward tokens of female respectability among the Santals, were torn from the wife's wrists. Redress was out of the question: the court sat in the civil station perhaps a hundred miles off. The English judge, engrossed with the collection of the revenue, had no time for the petty grievances of his people. The native underlings, one and all, had taken the pay of the oppressor: the police shared in the spoil. 'God is great, but He is too far off,' said the Santal; and the poor cried, and there was none to help them.

Of all this, Government knew nothing. A

single English officer had been deputed to look after the Santals, and what one man could do he appears to have done. As cultivation extended he enhanced the land-tax, and without oppression, or raising a single murmur, the revenue rose under his management from £668 in 1838 to £6803 in 1854. The administration of justice had to be deputed to inferior officers of the courts, Hindus who naturally sided with plaintiffs of their own race against the despised Santal. If the English superintendent could, with the utmost industry, get through the daily routine of his revenue work, he deemed himself fortunate. For inquiries into the history, the habits, or the necessities of the people, he had not a moment to spare. A well-armed and only half-reclaimed population of sturdy aborigines was allowed to shoot up with an uncared-for growth; and Government, so far from feeling any anxiety, congratulated itself upon having converted a hundred thousand wandering savages into settled agriculturists. It dwelt with delight upon the annual returns, showing how swiftly the jungle had given place to ploughed land, and cited the Santal settlement as a proof of what it was the fashion of the day to call a cheap and practical administration. But the Santal colony was destined to furnish a terrible argument against such an administration. The servants of an association like the East India Company, which had to make its dividends out of the revenues, were constantly liable to the temptation of looking at government in the light of a

mercantile undertaking, and of estimating its success by its profits. This temptation the Court of Directors resisted with a consistency most creditable to our nation, but ambitious subordinates in India sometimes took a narrower view, for the benign maxim that Indian governors are the trustees of the Indian people, not merely of a few hundred English shareholders, obtained a full and definite recognition only when India passed under the British Crown. In the administration of the Santal settlement, everything that cost money without bringing in a tangible return was avoided. Nothing was spent in obtaining a knowledge of the people. The superintendent was pre-eminently a practical man; and so it fell out that, early in 1855, the most peaceful province in the empire became the scene of a protracted rebellion, without any one being able to give either warning or explanation. Up to 1854 the Santal colonists within the ring-fence had only the choice of continuing the serf of the Hindu usurer, or returning to the sterile, over-populated country whence he had come. In 1848 three whole townships accepted the latter alternative, and, throwing up their clearings, fled in despair to the jungle. But the majority preferred the life even of a serf on the fertile lowlands, to exposing their women and children to the permanently half-starved existence of the forest, and accepted that mild form of prædial slavery which has been an immemorial institution in Bengal. Until 1860 no penal provisions existed against it, and indeed the

last preceding law, by regulating its incidents and refusing it the support of the courts, had acknowledged its existence.[64] Many of the Santals had no land or crop to pledge for their little debts. If a man of this class required a few shillings to bury his father, he went to the Hindu usurer for it; and having no security to offer except his manual labour and that of his children, he bound over himself and family as slaves till the loan should be repaid. The few pieces of silver were speedily spent on his father's pyre, the funeral feast was eaten, and next morning the unhappy household started for the usurer's residence, and delivered themselves into slavery. The master neither expected nor wished for the repayment of the debt, and took care, by working his slave every hour of the day, to leave him no leisure for earning a *peculium* with which to buy his liberty. The only inheritance he had to leave to his children was the debt, at first a few shillings, but now grown by compound interest at 33 per cent. into many pounds. If the slave refused to give up his whole time, the master stopped his food; if he worked for other people, the master took out legal execution against his person, and soon brought the ignorant creature to his knees by artfully exaggerating the terrors of the jail.

It does not appear that the masters acted with unnecessary cruelty. I have never heard a single tale of atrocities such as the American slaveholders are said to have practised. The Hindu is too

[64] Act v. of 1843 (Indian Council).

dignified to strike his dependants, and the jungle always remained when existence under a harsh master became intolerable. A mitigated serfdom like this is indigenous in every country where the people increase and the means of subsistence stand still. It represents the last resource of labour when placed by over-population completely at the mercy of capital. The labouring man, toil as he may, can earn at most a bare subsistence; a bare subsistence is the least that the master can give to his slave. Between 1838 and 1851 the population within the pillars increased from 3000 to 82,795, besides 10,000 on the outskirts; and the landless Santal, finding himself seldom worse off as a serf than as a free labourer, acquiesced in his fate. But in 1854 events occurred that completely altered the relation of capital to labour in Bengal. Government had determined to give railways to India, and the line skirted the Santal country for two hundred miles. High embankments, heavy cuttings, many-arched bridges, created a demand for workmen such as had never been known in the history of India. Some years later, twenty thousand were required in Beerbhoom alone; and the number along the sections running through or bordering on the Santal territories amounted to one hundred thousand men,[65] or more than the whole overflowings of the Santal race during a quarter of a century. Instead of labour going about the northern colony

[65] Return of daily average of workpeople employed on the East Indian Railway, by Mr. George Turnbull, chief engineer.

in fruitless search of capital, capital in unprecedented quantities roamed through the Santal country in quest of labour. The contractors sent their recruiters to every fair, and in a few months the Santals who had taken service came back with their girdles full of coin, and their women covered with silver jewellery, 'just like the Hindus,' as their astonished clans-people remarked. Every man, woman, and child could get work, and boys of ten earned higher wages on the line than grown men had ever earned in the village. It was then that the distinction between the slave and the freeman began to make itself felt. The entire free population who had not land of their own went forth with their women and children, their bows and arrows in their hands, and the national drum tatooing in front, to work for a few months on the railway, and then to return and buy land, and give feasts to their clansmen. The slaves, who were compelled to remain working for their masters at home, contrasted their own lot with that of the prosperous adventurers. Running away became common; and the Hindu masters had recourse, in self-defence, to a much stricter and more vigilant system than they had ever before practised. The same causes that had made the slave eager for freedom had rendered him more valuable to his master, and it became clear that the great issue would soon have to be tried, whether it was possible, in the second half of the present century, under British laws, to keep men slaves when it was worth their while to be free.

During the cold weather of 1854 and 1855 the Santals appeared to be in a strange, restless state. They had gathered in an excellent crop, and the influx of capital had enhanced the local price of agricultural produce. Nevertheless the highlanders continued excited and discontented. It was in vain that the magistrate of Beerbhoom, in reviewing the progress of his district during the year, reported everything prosperous. 'The very extensive works now being carried on by the railway authorities throughout the district,' he wrote, 'and the employment given by them to vast numbers of the poorer classes, has greatly ameliorated the condition of the inhabitants; and the universally abundant harvest has also contributed to their welfare.'[66] But in spite of high prices for their grain and high wages for their labour, the race swayed restlessly about. The truth was, that the rich Santals had determined to be no longer the dupes of the Hindus, who intercepted these high prices; the poorer agriculturists had determined to be no longer their serfs, and the day-labourers had determined no longer to be their slaves.

To a people in this frame of mind, leaders are seldom wanting. Two brothers,[67] inhabitants of a village that had been oppressed beyond bearing by Hindu usury, stood forth as the deliverers of their countrymen, claimed a divine mission, and produced heaven-sent tokens as their credentials.

[66] From the officiating Magistrate of Beerbhoom to the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division, dated 18th February 1855. B. J. R.

[67] Sidu and Khanu, natives of Bagnadihi, afterwards joined by their other two brothers, Chand and Bairab.

The god of the Santals, they said, had appeared to them on seven successive days: at first in the form of a white man in a native costume; next as a flame of fire, with a knife glowing in the midst; then as the perforated slice of a Sal trunk which forms the wheel of the Santal's bullock cart. The divinity delivered to the two brothers a sacred book, and the sky showered down slips of paper, which were secretly spread throughout the whole Santal country. Each village received a scrap without a word of explanation, but with an imprecation, as it would avoid the wrath of the national god, to forward it without a moment's pause to the nearest hamlet. Having in this way raised a general expectation of some great event among their countrymen, the leaders hoped that their English governors would inquire into the matter, and redress their wrongs; but their English governors had no time for such inquiries. They next petitioned the chief authority to do them justice, adding obscurely, that their god had commanded them to wait no longer. This officer knew nothing of the people or their wrongs. A cheap and practical administration has only time to look after its revenues; the Santal administration did this effectively; and for the terrible retribution which our ignorance of the people brought upon us, the system, not any individual officer, must be blamed. The English superintendent collected the revenue as usual, and put aside the complaints: the Santal leaders in despair had recourse

to the Commissioner—a high English official in charge of a divison of the province—and, it is said, plainly told him that if he would not redress their wrongs, they would redress them themselves.[68] The Commissioner could not understand what they wanted: the taxes came in as usual; the administration continued cheap and practical as before. 'God is great, but He is too far off,' said the Santal leaders. A last resource remained. Emissaries, bearing the national Sal branch, were despatched to every mountain valley; and the people, obedient to the signal, gathered together in vast masses, not knowing for what object, but with their expectation excited by the slips of paper, and carrying the invariable bow and arrows in their hands.

The brothers found that they had raised a storm which they could not control. A general order went through the encampment to move down upon the plains towards Calcutta, and on the 30th June 1855 the vast expedition set out.[69] The bodyguard of the leaders alone amounted to 30,000 men.

68 I should add that I have never been able to verify this statement from official documents.

69 It was asserted that on this day the Santal leaders addressed an ultimatum to the Government, to the Commissioner of the Bhagulpore Division, to the Magistrates and Collectors of Bhagulpore District and Beerbhoom, and to the various police inspectors through whose jurisdictions their route lay. I have never discovered one of these curious missives; few, if any, of them reached their destination, but an accurate contemporary writer, with the whole facts before him, gives his authority to the statement. The ultimatum is said to have insisted chiefly on the regulation of usury, on a new arrangement of the revenues, and on the expulsion, or, as some say, the massacre, of all Hindu extortioners in the Santal country.

As long as the food which they had brought from their villages lasted, the march was orderly; but unofficered bodies of armed men roaming about, not very well knowing where they are going, soon became dangerous; and with the end of their own stock of provisions, the necessity for plundering or levying benevolences commenced. The leaders preferred the latter, the rabble the former. On the 7th of July a native inspector of police heard of the entrance of a vast body of hill-men, with the two brothers at their head, into his jurisdiction; and the Hindu usurers, becoming uneasy, bribed him to get up a false charge of burglary against the band, and apprehend their leaders. He went out with his guards, but was met half-way by an embassy from the Santals, with instructions to escort him into their camp. The two brothers ordered him to levy a tax of ten shillings on every Hindu family in his jurisdiction, for the subsistence of their followers, and were about to dismiss him in peace, when some one discovered that he had come out with the intention of getting up a false complaint. At first he denied the charge, saying he was on his way to investigate an accidental death from snake-bite, but afterwards confessed the usurers had bribed him to get up a false case of burglary, and bring in their leaders bound. The two brothers said, If you have any proof against us, take us and bind us. The foolhardy inspector, presuming on the usually peaceable nature of the Santals, ordered his guards to pinion them; but no sooner were the words out

of his mouth, than the whole mass rushed upon him, and bound him and his minions. After a hurried trial, the chief leader Sidu slew the corrupt inspector with his own hands, and the police left nine of their party dead in the Santal camp.

From this day—the 7th of July—the rebellion dates. At the time of their setting out, they do not seem to have contemplated armed opposition to the Government. When all was over, their leaders, who in other respects at any rate disdained equivocation or falsehood, solemnly declared that their purpose was to march down to Calcutta, in order to lay the petition which the local authorities had rejected at the feet of the Governor-General; and the truth of this statement is rendered probable by the fact that their wives and children accompanied them. Indeed, the movement could not be distinguished at first from one of their great national processions, headed by the customary drums and fifes. Want drove them to plunder, and the precipitate outrage upon the inspector of police changed the whole character of the expedition. The inoffensive but only half-tamed highlander had tasted blood, and in a moment his old savage nature returned. Nevertheless their proceedings retained a certain air of rude justice. The leaders had a revelation enjoining the immediate slaughter of the Hindu usurers, but protection to all other classes; and assured the ignorant multitude that the great English lord in the south would sanction these proceedings and share the plunder.

The Anglo-Indian community is naturally liable to the apprehensions and hasty conclusions incident to a small body of settlers surrounded by an alien and a greatly more numerous race. To what such apprehensions and hasty conclusions may lead, when shared by the local administration, the recent Jamaica tragedy gave melancholy proof. Disaffection that would be sufficiently met by a few dozen policemen in England, becomes a very serious matter where millions of pounds' worth of property and many thousand lives depend upon absolutely unbroken order. It is not a question whether the disaffection has any chance of ultimate success. The Anglo-Indian community is perfectly aware that England can avenge, but it also knows that England may be too late to save. People who live in this situation are prone to exaggerate danger, as the Jamaica white population exaggerated it, and to be carried into excesses such as the Jamaica troops committed. With the Government rests the heavy responsibility of counteracting the natural tendency to panic on the part of the public; and this is one, but only one, of many permanent causes tending to prevent the Indian Government and the Anglo-Indian press from being in perfect accord. The English Government of India from an early period fully recognised their duty in this respect; indeed, on some occasions it would appear that the rebound has led them into the opposite extreme; the authorities having underrated the danger in a greater and more fatal degree than the outside community had exaggerated it.

The Santal insurrection found the Government strongly imbued with this spirit. A contemporary writer stated that when the blow was at last struck, twelve hundred troops could not be found within eighty miles of the rebels.[70] For a whole fortnight the Santals spread fire and sword throughout the western districts. The armed masses ceased to be controlled by the leaders who had set them on; and before the end of July, scores of villages had been burned, thousands of cattle driven away, our troops beaten back, and several Englishmen along with two English ladies slain. Many a little English station and factory lay at the mercy of the marauders; and that the atrocities of the mutiny of 1857 were not anticipated in 1855, is due not to the want of opportunity, but to the natural mildness of the Santal, only one of their leaders attacking English residents unless in self-defence. Government at once despatched troops, but the rains had set in, and the rivers became impassable for days together. 'One evening,' says an officer who played an important part in putting down the rebellion, 'when my regiment was at Barrackpore, the colonel sent for me and ordered me to march next morning with a detachment to Raneegunge, in Beerbhoom, as the hill-tribes had broken out. I had heard nothing of the affair before, nor was it, so far as I remember, talked of in military circles. Next morning I started at 4 A.M., and

[70] This part of my narrative is chiefly derived from the contemporary press—the *Friend of India*, the *Englishman*, the *Harkaru* and the *Calcutta Review*.

reached Burdwan by train about breakfast time. The Commissioner (the chief civil officer of that division of the province) came to me and ordered me to push on direct for Soorie, the capital of Beerbhoom, as it was in instant danger of attack. We marched for two days and a night, the rain pouring the whole way, and my men without any regular food. As we came near to Soorie, we found panic in every village. The Hindus fairly lined the road, welcoming us with tears in their eyes, and pressing sweetmeats and parched rice upon my exhausted Sepoys. At Soorie we found things, if possible, worse. One officer kept his horse saddled day and night, the jail seemed to have been hastily fortified, and the bulk of the coin from the treasury was said, I know not with what truth, to be hid in a well.'[71]

In this panic the Central Government declined to share. It could only act on the evidence before it, and the local authorities wrote much more calmly than they felt. The provincial records give a very inadequate idea of the state of affairs. The character which an Indian officer dreads most is that of an alarmist, and as the officials on the spot had failed to foresee the storm, there was a natural tendency to underrate it when at length it burst. This, too, without any intention to conceal, or even consciousness that their reports were apt to mislead. In every matter of fact their accuracy is

[71] Personal Narrative of Major Vincent Jervis; one of the MS. contributions on which this chapter is based. I have not been able officially to verify the legend of the treasure chests in the well.

beyond question; but in the inferences drawn from the facts the tendency appears. Some of them, only a few months before, had reported that crime in their jurisdiction had greatly decreased, that a new and more effective police had been introduced, and that the people had never been more contented, or the district as a whole so prosperous. It took time for men who had written in this strain in February, to realize that their district was the seat of a rebellion in July. Night attacks on houses by bands of from five to fifty men had always been common in Bengal, and it was a difficult matter to pronounce the exact line at which such enterprises cease to be civil offences and become overt insurrection. A single example will suffice. 'The whole inquiry only tends to prove,' wrote the magistrate of Beerbhoom, with regard to the sacking of a Bengali hamlet, 'that it was one of those occurrences common in Bengal, when the Dacoits were bold, adventurous, and determined, the Bengali a coward and helpless, and the village watchmen all absent from their posts.'[72] It is possible that in this individual case the magistrate may have been right in his conjecture, but in many similar cases there can be no doubt that he mistook rebellion for robbery. Each magistrate put off as long as possible the admission that his district was in arms against Government, and arraigned men, who should have been hanged as rebels, on

[72] From the officiating magistrate of Beerbhoom to the Commissioner of the Burdwan division, dated 8th Nov. 1855. B. J. R.

charges of burglary, or 'for assembling illegally and riotously with offensive weapons for the purpose of plunder, and to commit a serious breach of the peace.' This farce continued for weeks in the courts while a tragedy was being enacted outside. Such pangs does it cost a civil officer to acknowledge that his people are in revolt, and that the authority has passed out of his hands.

The Government therefore, judging from the reports before it, refused to be alarmed. It sent troops; but anxious to avoid the severities of martial law, and following precedents afforded by disturbed frontier districts in the last century, placed the troops under the orders of the civil authorities. But in so doing, it overlooked the difference between a collector of Mr. Keating's school in 1788, and a collector of 1855. Mr. Keating knew nothing of jurisprudence; but he selected the passes to be held, distributed his troops, and regulated their movements with consummate ability. The collector of 1855 was a more able lawyer, and administered his district with much cleaner hands, but he knew nothing of military tacties; and for the duties now devolved upon him he had not, and never pretended to have, any capacity. His military dispositions made him ridiculous in the eyes of the soldiers sent to act under him, dissension reigned within the English camp, and the rebels plundered and massacred at pleasure outside.

About the 25th of July, Government finding that it must take severer measures, placed the re-

duction of the rebels in the hands of an experienced commander,[73] with instructions that amounted to delivering over the disturbed districts to the military power. Then it relented, explained away or retracted its orders, and removed the independent authority from the general. 'It was not intended,' ran the despatch, 'that the military should act independently of the civil power against our own subjects; but that the nature of the military operations necessary for dispersing and capturing the insurgents, and for putting down the rebellion, should be entirely in the hands of the military commanders.'[74]

Even this half-measure gave a new vigour to the action of the military, and for a time seemed likely to answer the ends proposed. Detachment after detachment hurried to the west, patriotic native landholders armed and drilled their retainers;[75] English planters supplied the troops with funds on the march;[76] his Highness of Moorshedabad sent a splendid train of elephants, and insisted on bearing all their expenses;[77] and a Special Commissioner,

[73] General Lloyd.

[74] From the Secretary of the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of the Burdwan division, dated Fort-William, the 30th July 1865. Bn. R.

[75] *Vide* despatch conveying the thanks of the Government to Babu Bipacharan Chakarbati, a Beerbhoom landholder, dated 2d October 1855. B. R. R.

[76] Letter from the Commissioner of Burdwan to the officiating collector of Beerbhoom, dated 27th September 1855, para. 2. B. R. R.

[77] From the Special Commissioner suppressing the Santal insurrection, dated Berhampore, 22d August 1855.

vested with extraordinary powers, was appointed for the suppression of the rebellion.[78]

The details of border warfare, in which disciplined troops mow down half-armed peasants, are unpleasant in themselves, and afford neither glory to the conquerors nor lessons in the military art. After a lapse of thirteen years, the officers who reduced the Santals can hardly be brought to dwell minutely on the operation. 'It was not war,' one of them has said to me, 'it was execution; we had orders to go out whenever we saw the smoke of a village rising above the jungle. The magistrate used to go with us. I surrounded the village with my Sepoys, and the magistrate called upon the rebels to surrender. On one occasion the Santals, forty-five in number, took refuge in a mud house. The magistrate called on them to surrender, but the only reply was a shower of arrows from the half-opened door. I said, "Mr. Magistrate, this is no place for you," and went up with my Sepoys, who cut a large hole through the wall. I told the rebels to surrender, or I should fire in. The door again half opened, and a volley of arrows was the answer. A company of Sepoys advanced, and fired through the hole. I once more called on the inmates to surrender, while my men reloaded. Again the door opened, and a volley of arrows replied. Some of the Sepoys were wounded, the village was burning all round us, and I had to give the men orders to

[78] Another from the same to Captain R. D. Macdonald, dated the 21st August, etc. etc.

do their work. At every volley we offered quarter; and at last, as the discharge of arrows from the door slackened, I resolved to rush in and save some of them alive, if possible. When we got inside, we found only one old man, dabbled with blood, standing erect among the corpses. One of my men went up to him, calling him to throw away his arms. The old man rushed upon the Sepoy, and hewed him down with his battle-axe.'[79]

'It was not war,' the commanding officer went on to say; 'they did not understand yielding. As long as their national drums beat, the whole party would stand, and allow themselves to be shot down. Their arrows often killed our men, and so we had to fire on them as long as they stood. When their drums ceased, they would move off for about a quarter of a mile; then their drums began again, and they calmly stood till we came up and poured a few volleys into them. There was not a Sepoy in the war who did not feel ashamed of himself. The prisoners were for the most part wounded men. They upbraided us with fighting against them. They always said it was with the Bengalis they were at war, not with the English. If a single Englishman had been sent to them who understood their wrongs, and would have redressed them, they declared there would have been no war. It is not true that they used poisoned arrows. They were the most truthful set of men I ever met; brave to infatuation. A lieutenant of mine had once to shoot down seventy-

79 Personal Narrative of Major Jervis.

five men before their drums ceased, and the party fell back.'

By the middle of August these energetic measures had driven the insurgents from the plains. A proclamation was therefore issued, offering pardon to all except the leaders; and the civil officers, jealous of even the partial authority given to the military, represented that the necessity for continuing that authority had ceased. 'All has been quiet,' wrote the Beerbhoom magistrate, 'for seven weeks past. The villagers have returned to their homes, and the husbandmen are engaged in the cultivation of their land as usual. The Santals are nowhere to be found, ... having retreated to a place some thirty miles off, in another district.'[80] But the lull was only temporary, and precisely one month later we find the same officer reporting that 'during the past fortnight upwards of eighty villages have been plundered and burnt by the insurgents,'[81] the mails stopped, and the whole of the north-west part of the district in their hands. In one direction an army of Santals roved through the district three thousand strong; in another their numbers amounted to seven thousand; the civil authorities were driven

[80] Letter to the Commissioner, dated the 24th of August 1855, para. 2. Similar reports had been previously sent by the officers of the other disturbed districts; for on the 6th of August the Government decided, from the evidence before it, that the rebels had 'in a great measure abandoned opposition,' and that little remained to be done except to receive their submission. Despatch No. 1808 to the Special Commissioner. B. R. R. and C. O. R.

[81] From the magistrate of Beerbhoom to the Commissioner of Burdwan, dated 24th September 1855.

in from the outlying stations, the husbandmen deserted their lands, and the proclamation of pardon was received with loud defiance and contempt. The intermediate semi-aboriginal classes between the Santal and the Hindu, and indeed several of the very low castes of the Hindus themselves, appear at this time to have joined the rebellion, and carried off Brahman priests to perform the great October festival.[82] Even in their moment of success, however, the Santals were not wanting in a sort of barbaric chivalry, and usually gave fair warning of their purpose to plunder a town before they actually came. In the latter half of September (about the 22d or the 23d) the capital of Beerbhoom was thrown into a panic by the receipt of such a message. A post-runner returned one day, saying the rebels had seized him while on his journey, taken away his mail bags, and spared his life only on the condition that he would carry a twig of their national Sal tree to the magistrate. The latter official reported to Government that the twig had 'three leaves on it, each leaf signifying a day that is to elapse before their arrival.'

In spite of the common danger, discord still reigned between the civil and military authorities. The actual operations of the troops had been freed from the control of the magistrate; but as martial law had not been declared, the military remained individually amenable to the civil officers for their acts. No distinct line had been fixed where the

[82] The Durga Puja.

authority of the latter ended; constant misunderstandings resulted, and every post carried an angry reference on the point.

In the early part of November, after the western districts had suffered four months' devastation, Government reluctantly proclaimed martial law. It had tried in vain to avert the rigours of military occupation; but its leniency had only resulted in an occupation by the rebels, instead of by our own troops. The local officers, by understating the disturbances, had first allowed them to spread, and then grudged any transfer of their authority to the military till they found that the rebels had entirely usurped it. As soon as the order for martial law went forth, things assumed a very different appearance. Official bickerings ceased, and requisitions for supplies formed the only communications between the brigadier and the collector. A cordon of outposts, in some instances numbering twelve to fourteen thousand men,[83] quickly pushed back the Santals from the open county, and in six weeks nothing remained but to sweep the jungle clear of stragglers. Before the end of the cold weather (1855-56) the rebels had formally tendered their submission, and thousands of them were peacefully at work upon a new road.

But while the Government, misled by the reports of local officers, and actuated by its traditional leniency towards the people, had failed in promptly

[83] Letter from Brigadier L. S. Bird, commanding the Beerbhoom and Bancorah frontier force, to the Collector of Beerbhoom, dated 10th December 1855. B. R. R.

dealing with the rebels, it had lost not a moment in searching for and trying to remove the causes of discontent. It directed a minute inquiry into that cheap and practical administration which had formerly been so much applauded. The Santals had complained of the distance of the courts: the Government's own servants now reported, that along the Santal frontier the English officers 'are too few, and stationed too far apart, to exercise an effectual supervision over the great extent of country placed under their control.'[84] It speedily became apparent that the economy of the former administration consisted in taking the taxes without giving anything in return for them,—an economy that had resulted in an insurrection for which the State had paid more in six months than the cost of ten years' good government. No sooner had order been restored than the Governor of that day retracted the errors of his predecessors. He erected the Santal territory into a separate district. Instead of a single officer, taken from the subordinate department, the covenanted civil service was indented upon for its highest talent to administer the aboriginal frontier. The old police, who had tyrannized over the simple peasantry, were rooted out, and English officers dispensed justice at all the chief centres of the Santal population, besides going regularly on circuit through the villages. Justice was

[84] Joint Report of the Magistrate and Collector of Beerbhoom to the Commissioner of the Burdwan division, No. 145, dated 28th August 1855. B. R. R.

made cheap, and brought close to every man's door; and contemporary writers complained that Government had almost sanctioned the rebellion by granting all that the rebels had fought for.

The traditional coldness of the Bengal Government to opinions outside, if it had led to unwise leniency at the commencement of the insurrection, averted the most serious crimes at its close. To the public no punishment seemed too cruel for men who had remained in open rebellion during six months, burned towns, and forcibly occupied districts within a hundred miles of Calcutta. It is perhaps unfair to quote from the daily press articles written in the excitement of the moment; but how fierce and deeply rooted was the resentment of the Anglo-Indian community, may be gathered from an essay, written at leisure after all was over, for the *Review* which worthily occupies the first place among Indian periodicals: 'A wild barbarian suddenly admitted into the social intercourse of his superior in the grades of the human family, nearly resembles the adult tiger withdrawn from his lair and his haunts in the jungle.' In short, no one knew anything about the wrongs or the peaceful industry of the Santals. They were simply 'adult tigers' or 'bloodthirsty savages;' and the reviewer, dismissing the ordinary plan of punishing only the actual rebels as insufficient, adopts a proposal to deport across the seas, not one or two ringleaders, but the entire population of the infected districts.[85]

[85] *Calcutta Review*, March 1856.

Such clamours are naturally to be expected from a community in the position which a handful of our countrymen occupy in India. They in no way disturbed the action of the Government. The Santals had the chance of a regular trial, and only those suffered who had taken actual part in the rebellion. Most of them displayed great fortitude, owning with pride their share in the proceedings, and blaming the ignorance of Government as the cause of the war. 'You forced us to fight against you,' said one of their leaders in the Beerbhoom jail. 'We asked only what was fair, and you gave us no answer. When we tried to get redress by arms, you shot us like leopards in the jungle.'[86]

The wrongs of the Santals proceeded chiefly from the inefficiency of the administration, and they speedily disappeared under the more exact system that was introduced after the revolt. Without recourse to pernicious and ineffectual usury laws, the abuses of the usurers were checked at the point where high interest passes into extortion. The Hindu money-lender might charge as high rates as he could get, but the law took care that the same debts should not be paid twice or thrice over as before, and the courts were close at hand to force the fraudulent creditor to give receipts for the sums repaid him. False weights and measures were heavily visited; and for the first time in his history the Santal sold his harvest in the open market-place

[86] A few official papers on the Santal insurrection will be found in Appendix K.

without the certainty of being cheated. Slavery also ceased. The courts construed very strictly the Act of 1843 on the subject; and before 1858 it had become apparent that if a slave fled, or refused to work, his master had no effectual recourse at law against him. The demand for workmen on the railways completely changed the relation of labour to capital. Not many years before, it had been a good thing for a Santal to be the serf of a powerful master; but now he could earn a competence as a freeman. The natural reason for slavery—to wit, the absence of a wage-fund for free workmen—was no longer felt, and slavery itself disappeared. The Indian railways are frequently cited as proofs of how Englishmen can carry out great and untried enterprises in the furthest parts of the world. Such proofs they undoubtedly are; but to a person on the spot, it seems that the railway's chief mission in India has been, not so much to aggrandize our own race, as to restore the balance between labour and capital among the native population, and to root out slavery from the land.

A discovery had meanwhile been made in the remote north-east frontier of Bengal, which was destined still further to improve the position of the Santals and similar tribes in the west. The tea plant had been found growing wild throughout Assam and the neighbouring provinces. The first attempts at cultivating it were yielding enormous profits, but the absence of labourers forbade the hopes of raising it on a large scale. The most

fertile provinces in the world lay waste, waiting for inhabitants, when capitalists bethought themselves of the crowded highlands on the west, and began to recruit armies of labourers among them. The transport of large bodies of men everywhere requires supervision; but in India, unless the supervision be of the most careful character, the loss of life is appalling. The hill-men knew nothing of the dangers which beset them on their journey through the valley and up the eastern rivers, and the recruiters who superintended their transmission knew very little more. As the labour transport trade increased, the accommodation for conveying the coolies became alarmingly inadequate. They made the passage in crowded open boats, or in still more fatally crowded steamers, without the least attention to cleanliness or proper diet, and sometimes without medical assistance of any sort. On several trips the mortality attracted the notice of Government, and it became necessary to place the whole system under the superintendence of public officers. Care was taken that no labourer should be removed from his village under false pretences or by compulsion. On leaving his native district he had to appear before a magistrate, who asked him whether he was willing to go, and explained the nature of the service on which he was about to enter. If the recruiter had deceived the labourer, the latter could at this stage obtain his discharge, and an allowance for the expenses of his journey home. The term of service was

eventually fixed at three years, during which the planter guaranteed the labourer constant employment at wages about twice as high as those which prevail in his own country. The planter had also to pay the cost of his journey, provide a house for him, with medical attendance, and all other appliances which tend to keep the human frame in health. His whole family gets employment, and every additional child, instead of being the means of increasing his poverty, becomes a source of wealth. The labour is the lightest known to agriculture, and as soon as a boy can walk he can earn his living.

Migration has therefore become justly popular among the highlanders of the west, and thousands of them are conveyed every month to the distant provinces in the east.[87] The planters complained at first that the Government supervision was oppressively minute; but after several changes, a system of labour transport has been developed, without a parallel for humanity and efficiency in any other country in the world The Santal has not benefited by it so much as some of the kindred races, for he is less sturdy than the true highlander of the upper table land, and bears with difficulty a sudden change of climate. The lower sort of recruiters, however, collect large bands in the Santal country, and pass them off upon the planters

[87] I have no complete returns, but in 1865, when *ex officio* superintendent of labour transport at Kooshtea, I estimated the number at 3000 a month. In July it amounted to 3827, in May to 3236 adult labourers, or, including children, to about 4000 souls.

as belonging to some other of the hardier hill-tribes.

In a few years the emigrants return rich men, and meanwhile their going away renders the struggle for life easier among their countrymen who remain at home. While one stream flows steadily to the north-east frontier, another diverges at Calcutta, and crosses over the sea to the Mauritius or the West Indies, whence they return at the expiry of their contracts with savings averaging £20 sterling, a sum sufficient to set up a Santal as a considerable proprietor in his own village. The more industrious of the emigrants amass very considerable properties, a single family sometimes bringing back £200, which is as great a fortune to the hill-men of Western Bengal as £5000 would be to an English peasant.

The civilisation of the Santal has by no means kept pace with his material prosperity. The only vigorous attempt on the part of the State to give him education, has been in the half-Hinduized colony within the ring of pillars in the north; and the vehicle of instruction is Bengali, a language which the pure Santal abhors. What zeal and patience could do, the missionaries, aided by the Government grants, have done for the mixed Santals of that part; but if the race is ever to be won back to civilisation, it must be by strictly vernacular schools. A learned missionary in the south has reduced their language to writing, published its grammar, with a vocabulary appended, and every

month issues little Santal tracts from his private press. Schools have sprung up in his immediate vicinity, to which the Santals flock to learn their mother tongue; but he is hampered for want of funds, and unless the State assist the operations by a grant, their extension on an adequate scale can hardly be hoped for.

I have dwelt at considerable length on the Beerbhoom highlanders, partly on account of the valuable light which their language and customs shed upon the non-Aryan element in the rural population of Bengal, partly for the instruction which their recent history furnishes as to the proper method of dealing with the aboriginal races. The Indian Government cannot afford any longer to be unacquainted with the character, condition, and necessities of these primitive forest-tribes who everywhere surround our frontier, and whose ethnical kindred form so important an element of the population on the plains. In the old times, when war and pestilence constantly thinned them, the system of non-inquiry acted tolerably well; but now that peace is sternly imposed, when vaccination is introduced, and everything is done that modern science can suggest to reduce the ravages of pestilence to a minimum, the people increase at a rate that threatens to render the struggle for life harder under British rule than under Mussulman tyranny. At the same time, we have taken away slavery, the last resource of the cultivator when he cannot earn a livelihood for his family.

In short, we are attempting to govern according to the principles of Christian humanity and modern civilisation, forgetful that under such a system the numbers of a people increase, while in India the means of subsistence stand still. Progress implies dangers unknown in stationary societies, and an imported civilisation is a safe experiment only when the changes which it works are ascertained and provided for. In the absence of machinery for discovering the pressure of the population, we are liable at any moment to be rudely awakened to the fact that the blessings of British rule have been turned into curses; and, as in the case of the Santals before their rising, that protection from the sword and pestilence has only intensified the difficulty of subsistence. Statistics form an indispensable complement of civilisation; but at present we have no reliable means of ascertaining the population of a single district of rural Bengal, the quantity of food it produces, or any one of those items which as a whole render a people prosperous and loyal, or hungry and seditious. These are the problems which Indian statesmen during the next fifty years will be called upon to solve. Their predecessors have given civilisation to India; it will be their duty to render that civilisation at once beneficial to the natives and safe for ourselves.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMPANY'S FIRST ATTEMPTS AT RURAL ADMINISTRATION, 1765–1790.

IN 1784,[1] Parliament, dissatisfied with the constant changes in the government of the East India Company's territories, and moved by the grievances of 'divers rajahs, zemindars, polygars, and other native landholders,' directed the establishment of 'permanent rules for the administration of justice founded on the ancient laws and usages of the country.' During thirty years the Court of Directors had vacillated between the employment of English or of native officers in the internal management of Bengal. 'To appoint the Company's servants to the office of collectors,' wrote Clive to the Select Committee in 1767, 'or to do any act by any exertion of the English power, which can be equally done by the nabob, would be throwing off the mask, and declaring the Company soubah (governor) of the province.' Accordingly, for the first four years after the emperor at Delhi had invested the Company with the management

[1] 24 Geo. III. c. 25, s. 39.

of Bengal, this system of a double administration was upheld, and the actual work of government remained in the hands of natives. But a conviction had gradually made its way among the most experienced servants of the Company, that this shirking of our responsibilities was both unmanly and impolitic. Mr. Holwell, the principal survivor of the Black Hole, and its chronicler, declared himself strongly on the subject: 'We have nibbled at these provinces for eight years, and notwithstanding an immense acquisition of territory and revenue, what benefit has resulted from our successes to the Company? Shall we go on nibbling and nibbling at the bait, until the trap falls and crushes us? . . . Let us boldly dare to be soubahs ourselves.'[2]

It was not till 1769, however, that English supervisors were appointed to each of the great divisions of the province. From these gentlemen—too few in number to exercise an accurate oversight upon any single department—the Council expected an exhaustive control over the whole internal administration. Their principal function was to act as 'some check to the gross mismanagement and extortion practised by those who levied, and to the fraudulent evasion of those who paid, the assessment.'[3] But fiscal duties formed only a small part of their office. They were to be not so much revenue officers as antiquarians, historians, and rural

[2] Quoted from Mr. Kaye's Administration of the East India Company, p. 79. 8vo, 1853.

[3] Life of Lord Teignmouth, by his Son, p. 22, vol. i. 8vo, 1843.

statisticians. The Government furnished them with the heads of a few essays which they might begin upon at once. 'The form of the ancient constitution of the province, compared with the present;' 'an account of its possessors or rulers, the order of their succession, the revolutions in their families, and their connections; the peculiar customs and privileges which they or their people have established and enjoyed; and, in short, every transaction which can serve to trace their origin and progress, or has produced any material change in the affairs of the province.'[4] Having brought these simple historical researches to a satisfactory conclusion, they were to proceed to the investigation of the land tenures and of the revenues, to distinguish rapidly and infallibly between customary cesses and illegal extortions, to submit a scheme for the administration of justice, to draw up a list of the products of the province, to report on its commercial capabilities, not forgetting an exhaustive account of the means of developing its internal resources, with suggestions for removing those multitudinous obstructions between the producer and the consumer, which had so fatally damped the spirit of industry under Mussulman misrule. Their leisure hours, which the Council seems to have expected would hang heavily, the supervisors might beguile by acting as fathers to the people, protecting the weak against the strong, helping the cultivators to improve their land, the merchants to

[4] Proceedings of the President and Select Committee, dated 16th August 1769.

extend their trade, the manufacturers to increase their products, and all classes to be wiser and better than before. They were also to impress upon the agriculturist, 'in the most forcible and convincing manner,' that the Company's measures were devised for his relief, and that opposition to them would only be 'riveting his own chains, and confirming his servitude and dependence on his oppressors.'[5]

In short, the supervisors were expected to do more than they could possibly accomplish, and the result was that they did less than they might have done. During their first year of office, the great famine described in Chapter I. befell Bengal; and no one can read that tragical narrative without feeling that British humanity and administrative skill had not yet been brought to bear upon the rural masses. While ten millions of men were being swept from the face of the earth, the supervisors devoted themselves with assiduity to antiquarian or statistical essays; and, with a few noble exceptions, the frequent allusions they make to the sad scenes amid which their literary labours were conducted, are introduced not as the one urgent business of the day, but as connected with the revenues, or the state of cultivation, or whatever else formed the main subject of the report. For two years longer the internal government remained as completely in the hands of the natives as under Clive's 'double'

[5] Proceedings of the President and Select Committee, dated 16th August 1769. Quoted from Mr. Kaye's Administration, p. 164.

system. 'Black collectors' ground down the peasantry, and the revenue-farmers divided their energies between concocting frauds upon the Government and devising illegal cesses to be wrung out of the artisans and cultivators. But on the 13th of April 1772, John Cartier made over charge of the province to Warren Hastings,[6] and before the end of the month a momentous change had taken place. The new President boldly accepted the responsibilities of empire, and on the 4th of May the East India Company, by a solemn act, stood forth as the visible governors of Bengal. Committees of circuit, composed of the ablest men in the Council, journeyed from district to district, careless of the deadly heat of summer and the more deadly malaria of the rains, investigated the capabilities and necessities of each division on the spot, adjusted the revenues, and righted ancient wrongs with a strong hand. When the Commissioners returned to the capital and compared the results of their labours, it was found that the supervisors had failed to do the work for which they had been appointed. About the same time, the Court of Directors wrote an indignant letter, complaining that the supervisors had brought the province to a more miserable state than even that in which they had found it. Before this letter had reached India, however, their fate had been sealed.

In 1772 the intermediate machinery of 'black

[6] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 13th April 1772, para. 9. I. O. R.

collectors' between the taxpayer and the supervisors was abolished, and these latter became the collectors of the land revenue, vested with the powers of civil judges within their respective districts, and with a limited control over the native officials, who still retained their magisterial and police functions.[7] Two years, however, had scarcely elapsed before the old system was reverted to; the English collectors were recalled, their duties transferred to native agents, and the police made entirely over to the hereditary Foujdars.[8] In 1781, the Foujdars, who had thus been reinstated in 1775, were in their turn abolished, and their duties vested in the civil judge, or in the chief landholder in the neighbourhood, according to the caprice of the secretary who happened to be in office. Meanwhile Hastings had directed his energies in another direction than internal reforms; system existed nowhere, and the following year brought, as usual, a change.[9] At last the murmurs of the people reached the ears of Parliament, and drew forth the Act of 1784.[10]

The construction of a permanent system for the internal administration of Bengal had become so important, and the opposition promised to be so

[7] Warren Hastings' Plan of 1772 (formally adopted on the 21st August), secs. 1 and 2.

[8] Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, p. 6. 1812.

[9] The Administration of Justice in British India, by W. H. Morley, Barrister-at-Law, p. 52. 8vo, 1858.

[10] In treating of this period of harassing change, Auber is, according to his wont, complacent, Mill querulous, and Morley exact.

great, that the task was committed to a peer of the realm. 'On Monday last,' says the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 14th September 1786, 'arrived in the river the Right Honourable the Earl of Cornwallis, and on Tuesday he came on shore.' The new Governor-General carried with him instructions to frame a system of government in accordance with the usages of the country. But he speedily discovered that, in order to do this, he had first to ascertain what those usages really were, and that the ruinous changes of the past twenty years had chiefly proceeded from the hasty adoption of successive systems on insufficient data. But with regard to the agency by which the country was to be administered, Lord Cornwallis wavered not a moment. He decided that English officers must be at the head of every department, both in the capital and in the provinces, and that natives were trustworthy only so far as they could be strictly watched.[11] During the first three years of his government, he confined his attention to collecting evidence on which at a future date to base a permanent system, and to this end remodelled the divisions of Bengal, placing each district under an experienced English officer, in whom he concentrated the whole functions of government—fiscal, civil, criminal, and police.[12]

It was to this measure that Beerbhoom owed its

[11] It should be remembered that if Bengali officials under Mussulman rule were corrupt, they were also for the most part unpaid, and had grown accustomed to making their livelihood by oppression.

[12] MS. Records of the Board of Revenue, Calcutta. Selections

existence as a separate district. Mr. Christopher Keating, as collector, magistrate, and civil judge, ruled with an absolute sway over seven thousand five hundred square miles,[13] and made his policy felt by the hill-tribes many a day's march beyond his frontier. The district naturally divided itself into two parts: the Rajah of Beerbhoom's territory on the north of the Adji, and the Rajah of Bishenpore's on the south.[14] Mr. Keating directed the movements of the troops, received the rent of the cultivators, decided civil suits, purveyed for military detachments passing through his district, inflicted punishment on petty offenders, sent heinous ones in chains to the Muhammadan law officer, and acted as cashier to a great commercial company. It would be unreasonable to look for perfect finish in walls whose builders held the plummet in one hand and the sword in the other; and if the administration of such men as Mr. Keating was effective on the whole, it is as much as an after generation which works at greater leisure and with more complete machinery has a right to expect.

The realization of the revenue formed the col-

from *Calcutta Gazette* (1786), vol. i. pp. 185, 186. Morley, pp. 53, 54. The only limitations on the collector's powers were in regard to his magisterial and police functions. These will be subsequently explained.

[13] This calculation is based on the maps published by the Survey Department.

[14] Beerbhoom and the hill-country subject thereto, but now comprised within the Santal purgunnahs, 130 miles by 40, or 5200 square miles. Bishenpore, now part of Bancorah and Midnapore, 2300 square miles. Total area of the united district, 7500 square miles.

lector's paramount duty, and on his success in this respect, rather than on the prosperity of the people, his reputation as an officer depended. The Council still acted to a certain extent as if Bengal were an estate which yielded a large rental, but involved none of the responsibilities of government, and regarded its rural administrators rather as the land-stewards of a private property, than as the channels for receiving and redistributing a public revenue. It was a matter of the first importance, therefore, to get as much out of the district, and to spend as little upon it, as possible. In 1788 the total cost of governing Beerbhoom and Bishenpore amounted to £5400 sterling,[15] or fourteen shillings and sixpence the square mile. At present the area of the district has been reduced to less than one-third,[16] and the cost of administration has increased to £24,869 sterling,[17] or £10, 13s. 6d. per square mile. The difference between the old and the new view of our duties as rural administrators is placed in a still stronger light by analyzing the items of expenditure. In 1788 the charge for the collection of the land-tax was £4500,[18] in 1864 it was only £3550.

[15] The estimated monthly expenditure was sicca rupees 4394, or as near as may be C. R. 54,00 per annum. For the items, see Appendix L., 'Cost of Internal Administration before the Permanent Settlement.'

[16] Bishenpore and the hill-purgunnahs having been separated from Beerbhoom, the area of the present jurisdiction is now 2330 square miles. Report on the Police of the Burdwan Division for the Year 1863, by C. F. Montrésor. Esq., Commissioner, p. 17. Folio. Bn. R.

[17] Budget estimate for 1864-65. B. R. R.

[18] S. R. 3585 per mensem. Collector's Bills, 1788-89. B. R. R.

In 1788 the charge for civil justice was £708;[19] it is now £7160. In 1788 the cost of the criminal administration was £318[20] only; in 1864 it was £9920.[21] In everything which pertains to the mere gathering of the taxes, the expense has diminished; for the public burdens bear less heavily on the people, and are consequently more easily collected. In everything which pertains to the protection of the subject, the charge has increased from ten to thirty fold. The English have ceased to be the *publicani*, and have become the governors of Bengal.

The Rajah of Beerbhoom held the territory on the north of the Adji at an annual land-tax of £65,000,[22] or twelve pounds a square mile, including the forest and hill tracts. As a full half of the land fell under these categories, the Government rent amounted to ninepence on each cultivable acre. The Rajah of Bishenpore's estates on the south of the Adji were assessed at £40,000,[23] being equal to £17, 8s. per square mile, or allowing the same deduction for waste land, to one shilling per acre. The rajahs were left to bargain with the cultivators about the rents of their multitudinous little holdings,

[19] S. R. 556 per mensem. Monthly Bills, 1788–89. B. R. R.

[20] S. R. 250 per mensem. As the value of the sicca rupee was constantly changing, I have not attempted to give the exact value in English money. The above sums are within a pound or so.

[21] For the expenditure of 1864–65, see Appendix M., 'Present Cost of the Administration of Beerbhoom.' B. R. R.

[22] S. R. 611,321, Jamah-wasil-baki of 1788–89, forwarded to Board of Revenue, 1st May 1789. B. R. R.

[23] S. R. 386,707, Jamah-wasil-baki of 1788–89.

without any interference on the part of Government, so long as they punctually discharged the public demands. In most years, however, so far from paying the land-tax punctually, they failed to pay a considerable portion of it at all, and the collector had constantly to assist them with troops to enforce their claims on the under-tenants, and to put down armed opposition on the part of the cultivators.[24] The land-tax was subject to variation every year,[25] and the proprietors availed themselves of each slight increase as a pretext for enhancing the rents of their tenants. The latter complained that they never knew at sowing-time what rent would be exacted at harvest, as the middlemen concealed the fact of an increase until the peasantry were fairly embarked in the cultivation of their fields. A glaring instance of this occurred in 1788-89. The land-tax had been slightly augmented, and the rents raised all round in consequence. The peasantry resisted, on the plea that they had not been informed of the rise before the seed was in the ground, and the collector had to report the whole district in arms against the new assessment.[26] Mr. Keating's Sepoys speedily

[24] From Collector to John Shore, Esq., President and members of the Board of Revenue, dated 13th February 1789. Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 14th April 1790. Same to same, 25th October 1790; and in many other letters. B. R. R.

[25] Annual Bandobusts and Hastaboods, Board of Revenue. C. O. R.

[26] Letter from the Collector to John Shore, Esq., President and members of the Board of Revenue, dated 13th February 1789 B. R. R.

brought those who resided within the district to reason,[27] and judicial process was issued through the neighbouring collectors against the numerous cultivators who, according to the custom of the times, protected their goods from seizure by living just beyond the boundary of the district. The neighbouring collectors, however, were anxious to tempt cultivators to settle on the estates which the famine of 1769 had left depopulated in their own districts. Protection against judicial proceedings formed the most alluring bait they could offer. They therefore declined or delayed to serve Mr. Keating's summonses. An angry correspondence followed, the matter was handed up to Government, and the head assistants of the militant collectors were sent out to settle the question on the boundaries of their respective districts.[28] After hunting together for a few weeks, they came to the conclusion that as the cultivators had not been acquainted with the rise in the land-tax, and consequently could not have foreseen an increase of rent when tillage commenced, they could not be made liable for any subsequent enhancement during the year. Mr. Arbuthnot, the Beerbhoom assistant, foreseeing that a meeting with the collector after this decision would not be pleasant, remained out in camp, shooting tigers until he got appointed to another district, and then hurried down to Calcutta to take the oaths, with-

[27] Letter from the Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 25th October 1790. B. R. R.

[28] From Board of Revenue to Collector, dated 10th May 1790. The spot selected was Dacca-Barry. B. R. R.

out coming into headquarters to bid Mr. Keating good-bye.[29]

The distribution and collection of the land-tax will fall more appropriately to be considered in the volume on the land tenure. The authorities had nothing to do with the details as long as the public demand was satisfied. In event of a hopeless deficit, the collector imprisoned the landholder, and took charge of his estates. For a long time hopeless deficit had been the normal condition of things in Bengal, and no country gentlemen was sure of keeping out of jail unless he were an idiot or a minor. I have already mentioned that the earliest official records of Beerbhoom disclose the Rajah of Bishenpore in confinement,[30] and the young Rajah of Beerbhoom shared the same fate within a few months after he came of age.[31]

Besides the land-tax, only two other sources of revenue passed through the collector's hands—namely, the excise and the temple-tax.[32] In 1790 collectors were ordered to take charge of the spirit duty, and to report on the consumption of liquor in their respective districts.[33] Until this year the tax

[29] Letter from Mr. George Arbuthnot to the Collector, dated Dacca-Barry, 30th June 1790. Same to same, dated 12th July 1790, and other correspondence. B. R. R.

[30] From Collector to John Shore, Esq., P. and M.B.R., dated 10th February 1789. B. R. R.

[31] From Collector to Board of Revenue, 12th January 1791. From same to same, dated 1st November 1791. B. R. R.

[32] The temporary order to collect the dues and exactions known as 'Sayer' was not carried out in Beerbhoom.

[33] Circular order from the Board of Revenue, dated 19th April

had been levied sometimes by the landholder on his own account, sometimes by the collector, and sometimes by both.[34] It was a very difficult impost to levy at all. The native stills consisted of earthen pots with a bamboo tube, worth altogether about a farthing, which were fixed up in the jungle after dark, worked during the night, and broken before sunrise. In 1787 Mr. Sherbourne had imposed a tax on behalf of Government, of one pound on each spirit shop in the district capital, and eight shillings on every shop in the country, leaving the vendors free to make and sell as much as they could. The Rajah of Bishenpore levied from two to four shillings on each shop within his domains, and the Rajah of Beerbhoom extorted a considerable revenue as the price of permits to vend spirits clandestinely during the sacred month of Ramzan.[35] The spirit-dealer who resisted this exaction, and ventured to sell his liquor without such a licence, was dragged before the Muhammadan law officer, bastinadoed, or heavily fined.

The small amount of revenue produced by the Excise, notwithstanding the number of the imposts,

1790. The original has dropped out of the records; but the 19th of April is given as its date in the collector's reply. Like many other of the most valuable circulars, it is not to be found in the Peters edition of the Board's Circular Orders, printed by authority in 1838 4to, Calcutta.

[34] Collector to Board, dated 22d May 1790. B. R. R.

[35] The name of this singular impost was 'Soorie-Moosey-Koosey-Ramzan-Salami.' It is described in a report on Sayer, dated June 1790, from which document, along with the letter of the 22d May above cited, this account of the Excise is chiefly derived. B. R. R.

speaks very plainly as to the looseness and inaccuracy of the administration. In 1789, when the district was three times its present size, the spirit duty yielded £330 only;[36] in 1864-65 it amounted to £5294, or nearly twenty times the previous sum.[37] This rise is due not so much to increased consumption as to a more exact vigilance in levying the duty. When we assumed the direct administration of the district, drunkenness was universal among the lower orders. The excessive cheapness of liquor pandered to the craving for stimulants,—a craving always sufficiently strong among a semi-aboriginal population like that of Beerbhoom. Indeed, drunkenness formed so marked a feature in the Bengali character, as to be specified in ancient treaties, and is noticed in the letters and diaries of cursory travellers of those days.[38] One of the earliest magistrates of Beerbhoom has left it on record, that almost the whole serious crime of the district proceeded from this vice. Only the coarsest and most injurious preparations were used. A half-penny purchased six quart bottles of liquor that would madden the half-starved hill-men or foresters,

[36] Sicca Rupees 3154.

[37] Budget estimate for 1864-65:

Abkari, ...	C. R. 45,929
Opium, ...	7,018
	C. R. 52,947. B. R. R.

[38] For example, Mrs. Fay, after a few days' residence in Calcutta (1780), remarks on the immoderate fondness of the natives for liquor. Original Letters from India, p. 230. 8vo, Calcutta 1817. Meer Jaffier's Perwanah for the Granted Lands, 1757. Sanad for the Company's Zamindari, etc.

and prepare them for the most desperate enterprises. The effect of a strict enforcement of the excise in Beerbhoom has been to increase the price of the commoner liquors sixfold, and to introduce into general use milder sorts unknown in the district when it passed under British rule. Temperance has become a necessity to the people; and excepting among the semi-aboriginal castes, drunkenness is unknown. The following table shows the retail prices of intoxicating drinks in Beerbhoom in 1790 and 1866:—

Native Name.	Description.	Price in 1790.	Price in 1866.
Muhua ka sharab.	A sort of raisin wine.	Not used.	6d. per quart.
Tari.	Mild fermented liquor, extracted from the date tree.	Do.	$\frac{3}{4}$d. per quart.
Pakki, 1st quality.	Distilled rice liquor.	1$\frac{1}{2}$d. per quart	5d. per quart.
Pakki, 2d quality.	Do.	$\frac{3}{4}$d. per quart.	4d. per quart.
Pachwai.	Fermented rice liquor.	$\frac{1}{2}$d. per gallon	3d. per gallon.

Mr. Keating reported[29] that the last was by far the most pernicious. 'To its cheapness,' he writes, 'I ascribe the numerous robberies and other depredations almost daily experienced, it being a notorious fact on the records of the criminal court, that the perpetrators of these crimes first work themselves up to the perpetrating of them by this kind of liquor, and by smoking the herb called Bang.' The more cowardly sort of housebreakers in India, as elsewhere, still resort to drugs for artificial courage; but drunkenness, as a prolific source

[29] Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 22d May 1790. B. R. R.

of crime, is now unknown in Bengal. During nearly three years' residence in Beerbhoom (1863-66), only a single case came judicially before me which I could trace directly or indirectly to intemperance; and I believe that the magisterial officers throughout rural Bengal will bear similar testimony to the sobriety of the people. The hard-working labourers, like the corresponding classes in all countries, enjoy themselves in the liquor shop after their day's toil; but the most violent form their excitement takes consists of making profound obeisances to every one they meet on their way home. A few individuals of the upper classes, who have thrown off the restraints of Hinduism, are accused of secretly indulging in English spirits. Such cases, however, do not come before a court; and I repeat with confidence, what can be said of no European country, that drunkenness, as a regular element of crime, does not exist in Bengal. Disputes about fisheries, boundaries, water-courses, and precedence in religious processions, yield an unfailing crop of misdemeanours; but although nine-tenths of the crime of the district consists of assaults and similar petty acts of violence, it never appears that intemperance has led to a breach of the peace. Much of this is due to a well-administered Excise. Instead of the timid, laxly-enforced impost of eight shillings on each shop, with liberty to make as much liquor as the proprietor could sell, Government now exacts a heavy duty on each still; and at every point in the manufacture or vend of intoxicating liquors,

a licence is required, and a tax has to be paid. Occasionally over-zealous officers of the lower class lay themselves open to the charge of increasing the revenue at the expense of the sobriety of the people; but, as a whole, the efforts to maintain the price of liquor at the maximum rate consistent with the prevention of smuggling, have obtained an unusual measure of success. In Beerbhoom, at any rate, the legitimate object of a system of excise seems to have been attained, namely—to quote the opening words of the instructions issued by the Bengal Government to its revenue officers—'to raise as large an amount of revenue from intoxicating liquors and drugs as is compatible with the greatest possible discouragement of their use.'[40]

The only other source of revenue that the first English administrators discovered and appropriated in Beerbhoom, was one which, although insignificant compared with the land-tax, occupies many pages of the records, and is peculiarly characteristic of the time. Among the solitudes of the western mountains, on the extreme frontier of the district, is a Holy City,[41] with its ancient temple to Mahadeva, whither a vast concourse of pilgrims annually resort. The Mussulman dynasty had made the most of such opportunities of raising revenue at the expense of

[40] 'Rules for the Regulation of the Excise,' prescribed by the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces. Rule I. The present prices of spirituous liquors exhibited in the foregoing table were furnished to me by Babu Kinaram Ghose, zamindar of Nagri, and checked by personal inquiries from wine-sellers and palki-bearers.

[41] Deoghur--literally, the divine city or house.

the unbeliever; and their historians commend the pious Moorshud for his attentions to the great idol of Orissa, by which he restored a hundred thousand sterling to the annual revenue of that province.[42] The Rajahs of Beerbhoom had let the Holy City to the chief priest, who paid a fixed rent, and made what he could out of the devotees. The early English collectors thought they could increase the impost by managing the temple business themselves. In 1788 Mr. Hesilrigge, the head assistant, having been deputed to the Holy City, with a view to carrying out the change, organized a numerous establishment of priests, money-takers, and watchmen, at the expense of the State.[43] It was found, however, as soon as the temple became a Government speculation, either that the liberality of the devotees had strangely cooled, or that the priests must be embezzling the oblations. The revenue fell off; additional officers were entertained to watch over those already appointed; but the collector still complained that the chief priest frustrated his vigilance by 'besetting every avenue to the temple with emissaries, who induced the pilgrims to make their offerings before approaching the shrine.' This became at length a source of so much disquietude to Mr. Keating's strongly fiscal mind, that he determined to visit the temple, in order to exert his personal influence in stimulating the libe-

[42] Nine lacs of sicca rupees. Stewart's History of Bengal, p. 267.

[43] Report of the Collector to the Honourable Charles Stuart, President, and members of the Board of Revenue, dated 30th May 1790. B. R. R.

rality of the devotees, and in checking the peculations of the priests.[44]

Accordingly, escorted by a guard of thirty-five soldiers, the collector started on the morning of the 21st February 1791, and, allowing for the stately pace at which he was wont to travel, reached the Holy City about a week later.[45] 'I pitched my tent,' he writes, 'in the midst of the pilgrims, and as near the temple as possible, where I attended daily, and was an eye-witness so far as the confusion would permit me.'[46] 'At the stated period the doors[47] of the temple are thrown open, and the crowd rush in tumultuously, singing, dancing, prostrating themselves with all the vociferations and madness of enthusiastic fervour. Everything is uproar and confusion. The offerings of bullion and jewels, constituting the most valuable [part of the presents], are now made, [being cast before the face] of the deity Brijjanauth, and the collecting Brahmans have an opportunity of secreting what they please without fear of detection.' The ceremony consisted in pouring sacred water brought from the Ganges on the head of the god. Zeal

[44] From Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 11th January 1791. B. R. R.

[45] MS. folio, labelled 'Military Correspondence,' pp. 103, 104. B. R. R. The guard consisted of thirty Sepoys, one jemadar, two havildars, and two naiks. The distance from Soorie to Deoghur—the Holy City—was about eighty miles.

[46] From Collector to the Honourable Charles Stuart, President, and members of the Board of Revenue, dated 28th March 1791.

[47] This is an inaccuracy, probably an error in transcription; the temple had then only one small door for the entrance of pilgrims.

the pilgrims were abundantly gifted with, 'but of wealth among any of them there was no appearance. Not more than five families had any conveyance or hired house to reside in. About a hundred had simply a blanket drawn over a bamboo as a protection from the weather; and the rest,' varying from fifteen to fifty thousand, according to the season, 'took up their abode under the adjacent trees, with no kind of conveniency whatever. There was too general an appearance of poverty to suppose that the temple could profit much from the oblations of its devotees, and little could be expected from wretches who seemed in want of every necessary of life.'[48] It was from this destitute throng, however, that an increased tax had to be extorted. Accordingly, Mr. Keating appointed an establishment of one hundred and twenty armed policemen with fifteen officers.[49] It must not be supposed that any protection was afforded to the pilgrims in return. The road winded round the solitary hills, buried for miles in forest, and intersected at short intervals by deep ravines which formed innumerable caves, swarming with robbers and wild beasts. The plunderers carried on their depredations undisturbed by the magistrate as long as they did not entirely close the path. The sufferings of the pilgrims, however, at length became so intense as to affect the popularity of the shrine, and

[48] From Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 28th March 1791. B. R. R.

[49] From Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 30th May 1790, etc. B. R. R.

Keating was not the man to report, that the very year he had visited the shrine the temple-tax decreased. Accordingly, £860[56] was extorted in gold and silver, besides offerings of cloth, turbans, and rice.[57] The whole would probably amount to £1200, and the collector stated that not one half of what was levied from the pilgrims reached his hands. Assuming the total sum actually paid to have been £1500, the tax amounted to a rupee a head, or more than one man's subsistence for a month, from a crowd of fifteen thousand poverty-stricken wretches, of whom only a hundred and five had a shelter for their heads.[58]

John Shore, although his views as head of the Board of Revenue in 1789 were not precisely those which he expressed as President of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, loathed this constant ignoble squabbling between the collector and the priests. He desired that some arrangement might be made whereby the Government's share in the proceedings might appear as little as possible to sanction the rites. Mr. Keating, finding that his zeal in the matter struck no responsive chord among the higher authorities, but wholly incapable of comprehending a scruple in collecting revenue, from whatever source derived, suggested that the temple-tax might be farmed to the chief priest, naively adding, 'May not the number of pilgrims be en-

[56] Sicca rupees 8000.
[57] From Collector to Board, dated 28th March 1791. B. R. R.
[58] *Id.*

couraged when there is no interference of Government?'[59] He further recommended this plan, on the ground 'that religious artifices will be practised and the reputation of the temple increased.'[60] Lord Cornwallis shared Shore's sentiments, and laboured the more strenuously to carry out his views, on account of the difference of opinion which had preceded their separation. Mr. Keating therefore speedily received the Governor-General's sanction[61] to farm the temple to the chief priest, and before the beginning of 1772 our traffic on the superstitions of the people ceased to wear the form of a direct plunder of their offerings to their god. The priests possessed thirty-two rural communes, with abundance of pasture, and the tax was commuted to a rent nominally for the temple lands attached to the shrine—in reality, for the shrine itself.[62]

These worm-eaten manuscripts bring back to life a forgotten world. The religious ardour which braved the banditti of the road, the long exposure to the winter nights of a mountainous region, the oppression and profane interference of Government, is unknown to the Beerbhoom Hindus of the present day. Places of pilgrimage still exist, but the

59 From Collector to Board of Revenue, 30th May 1790, etc. B. R. R.

60 Letter from Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 28th March 1791.

61 Conveyed in the Board of Revenue's letter to the Collector, dated 18th July 1791.

62 From Collector to William Cowper, Esq., President, and members of the Board of Revenue, dated 27th October 1791. The second of two letters bearing this date. B. R. R.

people resort to them rather as marts or fairs than as the favoured abodes of the deity. Education has made havoc of ancient faith, and the most orthodox of the rising generation only abstain from open scepticism. It may be that the Hindus are entering that dark valley of unbelief which stretches between every old religion of a noble type and Christianity. The lamps by which their fathers walked during so many ages have burned out, and the more perfect light of the coming day has not yet dawned.

Besides these sources of Government revenue, twenty-six imposts, to which custom had given a sort of sanction, were levied by the landholders on their own account.[63] The salt-duty was managed by a separate department in the seaboard districts, and levied before the article passed into consumption. Indeed, the only mention of it in the local records, previous to the permanent settlement, refers to a native officer of the department, who, while passing through the district, extorted benevolences right and left from salt-vendors by the way.

Next in importance to the punctual realization of the land-tax, were the collector's duties as head of the Finance Department of the Company's mercantile affairs within the district. Mr. Keating was cashier, and his treasury a provincial bank, at which the commercial resident kept his account. The net

[63] A list of twenty-five is given in a Report on Sayer, dated June 1790; another is mentioned in a letter from the Collector to William Cowper, Esq., President, and members of the Board of Revenue, dated 7th August 1791. B. R. R.

revenue of the district exceeded £100,000 sterling,[64] and the expenses of government seldom amounted to £5000. Of the remaining £95,000, part was remitted to Calcutta or to other treasuries, and part was retained to carry on the Company's manufactures in the district. The object of Government then, as now, was to have as little money as possible lying unused in the provincial treasuries,—an object which the more perfect machinery of the present day accomplishes by a mere process of routine, but which at the period under review was complicated by the collector's liability to be drawn on at any time by the commercial agents. The Calcutta authorities gave timely notice of drafts when practicable; still the collector required considerable experience and foresight, in order to send the largest possible remittances out of the district, and yet to keep enough to avoid all risk of having to dishonour the Company's cheques within it. The specie retained in the treasury averaged £7000 sterling; as soon as it amounted to £10,000, a remittance to Calcutta was effected. Mr. Keating seems to have been less successful as mercantile cashier than as a revenue administrator. Reprimands from the Accountant-General came as regularly as the end

[64] Land-tax of Beerbhoom, . .	S. R. 611,321 : 7 : 16
Land-tax of Bishenpore, . .	S. R. 386,707 : 11 : 7
Total. . . .	S. R. 998,029 : 3 : 3

Of this about S. R. 950,000, or, in round numbers, £100,000, were usually realized. Jamah-wasil-baki for 1788–89, etc. B. R. R. and C. O. R.

of the month; and not without reason, for while the Calcutta exchequer had been emptied to carry on the Mahratta war, and the Company was borrowing thankfully at exorbitant rates, Mr. Keating calmly retained a cash balance of £19,000 lying unused in his treasury.[65] The district Government bank was managed thus: The Board of Trade forwarded an estimate of the drafts to be drawn upon the district bank during the ensuing six months, and the Board of Revenue named the treasury to which the surplus should be remitted. The collector sent a statement on the last day of each month exhibiting the cash balances, and mentioning by what remittances he purposed to dispose of them. The amount and date of the remittances were therefore left to the collector's discretion, instead of being fixed, as at present, by the central Government.

Of this discretion Mr. Keating did not always make a sound use. On one occasion he found himself unable to meet a commercial draft for £8000, for the simple reason that he had not kept enough money in his treasury.[66] On another, the district was thrown into consternation by the treasury stopping payment altogether. In the end of 1790, the war with Tippoo had drained the Company's treasure-chests, and the failure of the crops in

[65] Mr. Caldecott, Accountant to the Board of Revenue, called for an explanation on September 15, 1790.

[66] From Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 19th April 1789; also, correspondence with Mr. John Cheap, Commercial Resident at Soorool. B. R. R.

Southern India left the whole deficit to be borne by the Bengal districts.[67] The collectors were ordered to send down every available rupee to Calcutta; a loan, somewhat on the principle of a Tudor benevolence, was obtained from the Nawab;[68] and on the 15th of November the Accountant-General directed all disbursements to be suspended. Ten days later came another letter still more urgent for remittances; during the winter the demand was frequently repeated, and the provincial Government banks throughout Bengal remained closed.[69] It requires a minute acquaintance with the economy of rural Bengal to understand the distress which followed. The Company was a great manufacturer, and the immediate result of these measures was to throw many thousands of families out of work in mid-winter. The sudden drain upon the specie of the province, moreover, carried off the only currency in which the cultivators could pay their rent or the artisans receive payment for the goods they had delivered to the commercial resident. Starving crowds besieged the Treasury, and this single order of Government inflicted more suffering than a succession of bad crops, and contributed no trifling quota to that vast total of unrecorded misery

[67] *Calcutta Gazette* of 18th November 1790. Selections, vol. ii. p. 280. The famine is referred to in many other places. A few months previously Madras had been forced to draw on the central treasury in Calcutta for £21,000. C. O. R. and I. O. L.

[68] *Calcutta Gazette*, 18th November 1790. Sel. ii. p. 278.

[69] From A. Caldecott, Esq., officiating Accountant-General, to Collector, dated 15th November 1790. From same to same, dated 25th November 1790, 7th January 1791, etc. B. R. R.

on which our Indian trophies are erected. The starvation of the weavers during those winter months, and the general belief that the Company's sway had come to an end, were long remembered in Beerbhoom.[70]

The guarding of treasure parties demanded close attention. So unsafe was the country, that people never travelled except in large parties, or under the protection of armed men. Persons of rank were accompanied by their own retainers, and more than once the collector called on the commanding officer for a detachment of infantry, to escort wealthy natives, who were attempting to pass through the district with an insufficient force.[71] Indeed, an armed retinue had become a necessity for every one who wished to make a figure on his travels. The life of a civilian was as sacred in those wild times as it is now. The assistant magistrates and commercial agents camped in the haunts of the banditti without any personal risk; but the collector, deeming his position as head of the district demanded some little pomp, never stirred out of Soorie without a detachment of Sepoys. A few weeks before Mr. Keating's arrival at Beerbhoom, a treasure party had been overpowered and £3000 plundered; and the new collector determined that under his rule

[70] The only disbursement excepted from the general interdict in Beerbhoom was the reward for killing tigers, to which was subsequently added the diet of prisoners. In salt and opium districts the advances for these articles of revenue were also excepted. B. R. R.

[71] MS. 'Military Correspondence,' folio. On one occasion the Rajah of Chittra's agent required a guard; on another, a rich native gentleman belonging to Burdwan, etc.

no consideration for the military should lead to a similar misfortune. Some of his demands sound unreasonable enough to officers of our days. On one occasion, in the middle of the rains, he called for an escort to convey the paltry sum of £200 to Moorshedabad.[72] The guard consisted of at least one officer and five men, for a smaller number never ventured into the jungle; and the journey, including the return, at that season of the year occupied fifteen days. The pay of a Sepoy was ten shillings a month, that of the officer may be set down at a pound; so that the cost of escort upon a journey that now occupies a few hours, amounted to nearly 5 per cent. of the whole remittance. On another occasion, when the commanding officer could ill spare his men, the collector called for two heavy detachments to guard remittances to the same destination within a few days of each other, and the treasury guards had often to be reduced in order to meet these vexatious demands. The average number of military employed on escort duty amounted to sixty soldiers and nine officers at a cost of £52 per mensem,[73] or £624 per annum,

[72] MS. 'Military Correspondence,' p. 128.

[73] The charge per mensem for a detachment of twenty Sepoys, with its complement of officers, was as follows:

1 Jemadar,	at S. R. 13,	S. R. 13
1 Havildar,	at „ 9,	„ 9
1 Naik,	at „ 7,	„ 7
20 Sepoys,	at „ 5,	„ 100
Good service allowances,		6
		S. R. 135 per mensem,

equal to £14 sterling. Letter to the Collector from George Cheap,

for remittances rarely exceeding £40,000 a year. The remittances in 1864 amounted to £59,600, at a cost of only £20 for guards.[74] Indeed, the whole charge for transmitting £59,000 in 1864 hardly exceeds one-tenth of what was paid for the mere escort of £40,000 in 1789.[75]

As head of the provincial Government bank, the collector had to give some attention to the currency of the district. The Company paid a high premium on its loans, and therefore deemed it important to have as many as possible of its notes in circulation. Complicated and vexatious rules were enacted to attain this object. It paid all salaries or fixed disbursements over £1200 a year, half in notes, half in cash,[76] thus saddling individuals in remote places with Company's paper, which they had to get rid of at a loss.[77] Fre-

Esq., paymaster to the up-country garrisons, dated Calcutta, 11th April 1789.

[74] This return has been furnished from the office of the District Superintendent of Police. The average of two half-years, viz. that ending 31st December 1864 and 30th June 1865, was Rs. 100 per six months, or £20 per annum.

[75] The remittances during the financial year 1864-65 were £50,000 in specie and £9600 in notes. The entire charge of transit and escort was Rs. 760 : 13 : 1, or £76, 1s. 8d. sterling, of a fraction over one-tenth per cent. on the sum remitted. The distance of the treasuries to which remittances were sent averaged 150 miles, or three times farther than the average distance in 1789.

[76] Resolution of the Governor-General in Council, dated 27th May 1789, etc. It is not clear whether the notes referred to in this resolution bore interest; but it is evident from the treasury records that there were a certain class of unpopular notes forced into circulation. C. O. R. Cf. Sir James Steuart's Proposals for the Extension of Paper Credit in Bengal, 1772. I. O. L.

[77] The discount in September 1787 was 7 per cent. on Govern-

quently, indeed, there was nothing in the treasury except paper, with which to pay the officials; and an old newspaper announces as a great matter that the Calcutta employés would receive a month's pay in silver. Although paper was made a legal tender from the Government to the public, it seems that the public could not as a matter of right offer it in discharge of the Government demands. There is a letter from Mr. Keating to the Board of Revenue, saying that a payment of the revenue had been tendered in notes, and asking whether he should receive them.[78]

Every page of the records bears witness to the miseries incident to a vitiated currency. The coinage, the refuse of twenty different dynasties and petty potentates, had been clipped, drilled, filed, scooped out, sweated, counterfeited, and changed from its original value by every process of debasement devised by Hindu ingenuity during a space of four hundred years. The smallest coin could not change hands, without an elaborate calculation as to the amount to be deducted from its nominal value. This calculation, it need hardly be said, was always in favour of the stronger party. The treasury officers exacted an ample discount from the landholders,—a discount which, when Bengal passed under British rule, amounted to 3

ment certificates. In 1785 it was double these amounts.—*Calcutta Gazette*, 6th September 1787. I. O. L.

[78] To John Shore, Esq., President, and members of the Board of Revenue, from Collector, dated 11th April 1789, etc. B. R. R.

per cent. after a coin had been in circulation a single year, and to 5 per cent. after the second year, although no actual depreciation had taken place.[79] The landholder demanded a double allowance from the middleman, and the middleman extorted a quadruple allowance from the unhappy tiller of the soil. In a long indignant letter on the illegal cesses under which the cultivator groaned, Mr. Keating singles out the 'batta' or exchange on old rupees as the most cruel, because the least defined.[80] No recognised standard existed by which to limit the rapacity of the treasury officers. The Government held them responsible for remitting the net revenue in full, and left them to deduct such a proportion from each coin, as they deemed sufficient to cover all risk of short weight. Moreover, so great was the variety of coin in use, that they claimed a further discretion as to what they would receive at all. Cowries (shells), copper coins of every denomination, lumps of copper without any denomination whatever, pieces of iron beaten up with brass, thirty-two different kinds of rupees, from the full sicca to the Viziery, hardly more than half its

[79] The Principles of Money applied to the Present State of Coin in Bengal, composed for the use of the Honourable the East India Company, by Sir James Steuart, Baronet, p. 16, small 4to. Privately printed for the Company in 1772. Grant's Expediency Maintained, p. 23, 8vo, 1813. Cf. Essais sur l'Histoire Économique de la Turquie, p. 109, Paris 1865.

[80] From Collector to the Honourable Charles Stuart, President, and members of the Board of Revenue, in reply to the Board's order to introduce the decennial settlement, dated April 1790. B. R. R.

value,[81] pagodas of various weights,[82] dollars[83] of different standards of purity, gold mohurs worth from twenty-five to thirty-two shillings each,[84] and a diversity of Asiatic and European coins whose very names are now forgotten.[85] At some treasuries cowries were taken, at others they were not.[86] Some collectors accepted payment in gold; others refused it; others, again, could not make up their minds either way;[87] and the miserable peasant never knew whether the coin for which he sold his crop would be of any use to him when he came to pay his rent.

Notwithstanding the oppressive precautions observed in receiving coins at the treasury, the number

[81] *Calcutta Gazette* of 1st November 1792. The value of the viziery rupee was 37 per cent. less than the siccas of Moorshedabad, Patna, and Dacca. For list of rupees in use, and their value, see Appendix N.

[82] Worth from six shillings and eightpence to eight shillings and sixpence, according to the weight and the current rates of exchange.

[83] *Calcutta Gazette* of 14th January 1790.

[84] Sir James Steuart's Principles of Money applied to Bengal, p. 26, 410, 1772.

[85] For a list of coins current in six Indian ports in 1763, see Appendix O.

[86] In Sylhet they were taken, and proved very difficult to be got rid of. *Calcutta Gazette* of 6th October 1791. Lives of the Lindsays, by Lord Lindsay, iii. 170. In Beerbhoom they were not received. B. R. R.

[87] Mr. Keating, shortly after his arrival, was offered gold in payment of the land-tax, and on referring the matter to the Board, obtained its sanction to receive gold coins. Letter from Collector to John Shore, President, and members of the Board of Revenue, dated 11th April 1789, with reply thereto. On the other hand, there is a petition 'by several respectable mercantile gentlemen requesting orders for the free currency of gold in payment of the revenues,' referred to in the *Calcutta Gazette* of Thursday, 17th April 1788. B. R. R. and I. O. L.

of bad rupees which found their way into the remittances sounds incredible at the present day. In one small remittance of 40,738 rupees (£41,000), no fewer than 738 were reported to have 'turned out bad.'[88] At present the bad rupees do not average five in a remittance of one hundred thousand. The coin in circulation, moreover, was insufficient for the commerce of the country, and Government complicated the evil by injudicious interference. It attributed the scarcity of coin, according to the fashion of the day, to 'tricks in raising the *batta* (*i.e.* exchange),' 'to the extortion of usurers,' 'to a combination of moneyed harpies;'[89] in short, to every reason but the true one—namely, the inadequacy of the coinage to carry on the trade of the province. A fourfold currency—gold, silver, copper, and notes—had gradually been introduced, without a single provision to guard against the difficulties to which such a state of things gives rise. Of arbitrary regulation, however, there was no lack. The Government from time to time blindly fixed the price of bullion, and the incipient Anglo-Indian press not less blindly supported the measure. A committee of inquiry sat; it need scarcely be added, without in any way mending matters. 'The discount on gold mohurs,' wrote the editor of the *Calcutta Gazette* in 1788, 'still continues enormously high, to the ruinous distress of the poor, and to the great inconvenience of

[88] Letter from J. E. Harrington, Esq., Collector of Moorshedabad, to C. Keating, Esq., Collector of Beerbhoom, dated 27th September 1790. B. R. R.

[89] *Calcutta Gazettes* of 28th February, 10th April 1788, etc. I. O. I.

the economical householder. The continuance of this evil, much more the increase of it, after the large imports of silver into Calcutta from Burdwan and other districts, evidently proves it is owing to a combination of moneyed harpies. Should they persevere till the commencement of the next sessions, it is anxiously to be hoped they will be called to account for their illegal practices before a jury of their fellow-citizens, and will experience the utmost severity of the law, which prohibits and punishes the engrossment of any article for the advancement of its price. Coined silver is an article that admits of precise determination of its proper value, and the engrossment and enhancement of it may easily be brought to specific proof.' 'It is seriously to be hoped,' he continued, a fortnight later, 'that some effectual measures will be taken to put a stop to the progress of this evil, so severely felt by the community at large; otherwise trade must sink under usury.' But at the very time at which the aid of the courts was most loudly invoked, the Legislature had omitted to make any provision for preserving the purity of the coin. The Anglo-Indian community clamoured for penal restrictions and interference to a degree far beyond that which the law can successfully exercise, while the Anglo-Indian Government had not enabled the courts to perform a duty which they could easily have accomplished. Sir William Dunkins, in charging the grand jury of Calcutta,[90] regrets that clipping,

[90] *Calcutta Gazette* of 18th June 1795. I. O. L.

counterfeiting, and similar offences against the coin could not be dealt with more seriously than as cases of simple cheating.

The debasement and inadequacy of the rural coinage proceeded from two sets of causes; one of which had been at work before the English had anything to do with Bengal, the other resulting from their injudicious but well-meant efforts at currency reform. The Mussulmans recognised only one circulating medium—to wit, silver. Gold coins were struck, but they 'were left to seek their own value.'[91] In short, gold was treated as bullion, and the stamped pieces called mohurs circulated at various prices, according to the current price of the metal. The weight and fineness of the Delhi mohurs was uniform, being of the same weight and fineness as the silver rupee; but a Delhi mohur sometimes sold for twelve, sometimes for thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen sicca rupees.[92] In the same way, copper coins, when transferred in large quantities, were and are to the present day sold; that is to say, they do not pass at their full denominational value, but at a lower rate, the proportion deducted depending on the locality, and the comparative demand for silver or copper coins. Indeed, the tendency of copper coins to accumulate in the district treasuries still forms a subject of frequent official correspondence, and a percentage is in some

91 Sir James Steuart's Principles of Money applied to Bengal, p. 25, 4to, 1772.

92 *Id.* p. 26.

places allowed to the collectors of the assessed taxes—such as the municipal police—for converting the petty copper payments into rupees.

The silver currency, therefore, was the only circulating medium which native governments steadily endeavoured to regulate, and even in these efforts they did not succeed.[93] In the first place, there was a number of mints, none of which honestly adhered to the same standard, and many of which did not even pretend to do so. One of the most cherished insignia of sovereignty was the striking of coin; and little potentates who in every other respect acknowledged allegiance to Delhi, maintained their independent right of coining. As it was the last privilege to which fallen dynasties clung, so it was the first to which adventurers rising into power aspired. While the Mahrattas were still mountain robbers they set up a mint; and in 1685 the East India Company, at a period when it had only a few houses and gardens in Bengal, intrigued for the dignity of striking its own coin. The silver pieces thus produced passed from province to province in the hands of wandering merchants, or in payment of tribute, and it became necessary to fix some ideal standard by which to calculate their value.[94] No two mints uniformly struck rupees of

[93] The standard weight of a rupee was theoretically one *sicca*, equal to 179·5511 grains troy; the standard fineness was $\frac{98}{100}$ pure silver.

[94] The Mussulmans in Turkey resorted to practically the same expedient, and for the same reasons. See an excellent series of Essais sur l'Histoire Economique de la Turquie, par M. Belin, Secretaire-Interprète de l'Empereur à Constantinople. Imperial Press, 1865.

the same weight and fineness; indeed, very few mints invariably adhered even to their own nominal standard, and after the coin reached the public it was subjected to every species of debasement. The actual coin at any single mint, therefore, could not be selected as the standard, for no mint could be trusted, and whatever could be handled was sure to be falsified. An ideal coin was accordingly invented, by which all rupees might be valued, and one of the Company's earliest and soundest financial advisers has left on record the process. 'When a sum of rupees is brought to a *shroff* (banker or money-changer), he examines them piece by piece, ranges them according to their fineness, then by their weight. Then he allows for the different legal battas (deductions) upon siccas and sunats; and this done, he values in gross by the *current rupee* what the whole quantity is worth. The *rupee current*, therefore, is the only coin fixed by which coin is at present valued; and the reason is, because *it is not a coin itself*, and therefore can never be falsified or worn.'[95]

This process, though simple and no doubt profitable to a banker or treasury officer, was impossible to the poor peasant. The whole rural population had to receive payment for their crops in coins whose value they did not understand, and then to pay away these coins for rent and taxes according to a calculation which they could not comprehend.

[95] Sir James Steuart's Principles of Money applied to Bengal, p. 17, 4to, 1772.

We can now appreciate the feelings of almost personal gratitude with which the husbandmen of India long remembered Todar Mal, a financier who, while he raised the revenues, authoritatively re-enacted the option of paying them in kind.

Such was the state of affairs when the East India Company received charge of Lower Bengal. The number of coins in its treasure-chests afforded no index of its financial position; and although it got over this difficulty to a certain extent by keeping its accounts in current rupees, the work of converting the actual coinage into the ideal standard, proved too laborious to be very accurately performed. Setting aside the multitudinous differences of weight, hardly two remittances a year were made in coin of the same fineness. Of twenty-eight large payments, of which we have an accurate record,[96] between 1764 and 1769 inclusive, only three were in rupees of standard purity; and before the value of the other twenty-five could be ascertained, it was necessary to melt them down, weigh, and assay them. The obvious remedy was to call in the old currency, issuing in place of it a new coinage of fixed weight and purity; and on this important duty the first English governors of Bengal went heartily to work.

But presently they discovered that the remedy was by no means so obvious or easy as they had supposed. Recoinage cost a heavy percentage; and people would not bring their debased coin to the

[96] Sir James Steuart's Principles of Money applied to Bengal, pp. 18-21.

mint when they found that they got back barely three-fifths of what they gave in. Partly from this reason, and partly from delay in re-issuing the rupees, the province found itself drained of its currency. Business came to a stand : the richest merchants could obtain no circulating medium with which to purchase goods for their traffic, and no one would sell on credit, well knowing that, when the time of payment came, no coin would be forthcoming. To meet this emergency, the Council in Calcutta determined to issue a gold currency, which should pass not merely for its equivalent in silver at the market rates, but as a distinct medium of circulation, each piece having a fixed denomination of value. The Council, however, not having the requisite bullion to start with, tried to induce the people to bring their gold for coinage, by attaching an arbitrary value to the new gold mohurs. According to law, each piece was to pass at a rate which exceeded by 17½ per cent. its market value in silver. Crowds besieged the mint with ingots to be manufactured into these profitable coins; but the more gold mohurs the Council issued, the greater the scarcity in the currency, for some unaccountable reason, became. Not till six years afterwards was the mystery explained. The 'encouragement' given to gold simply meant discouragement to silver. The Council, by fixing the value of the new coins at arbitrary rates, had rendered it 17½ per cent. more profitable to make payments in gold; but it had only done so by rendering it 17½ per cent. less pro-

fitable to pay in silver. The gains of the fortunate few who held gold had to be paid a thousand-fold by the unfortunate many who held silver. The latter refused to make payments in a currency that had thus been depreciated 17½ per cent., and sent it abroad either in exchange for gold, or for purposes of trade. The East India Company itself, in its mercantile capacity, carried a quarter of a million sterling per annum out of Bengal to China;[97] Madras constantly required specie from Bengal to purchase its investment; and Bombay, which did not pay the expense of government, had to be supplied from the same source.[98] In the years following this memorable experiment, the Council constantly complain that while no currency existed with which to carry on internal commerce, the exportation of silver went on upon an unprecedented scale.

Another influence presently began to intensify the evil. India had always depended on its foreign trade for a supply of the precious metals. It absorbed vast quantities of silver for jewellery and domestic ornaments; and Romans, Venetians, Por-

[97] Sir James Steuart, pp. 26, 32, 57, etc. I. O. I.

[98] Bengal from the very first seems to have been the milch cow from which the other Presidencies drew their support. A hundred references to the Indian records and papers of the last century might be given. For example, letters from the President and Council of Bengal to the Court of Directors, dated the 25th August 1770, paras. 26 and 30; the 9th March 1772, para. 22, in which the Council complain that the Bengal treasuries are completely emptied by sending coin to the other Presidencies; Hicky's *Bengal Gazette*, 29th April 1780, with innumerable notices in the *Calcutta Gazette*, 1784–1804. I. O. R., C. O. R., and I. O. L. Cf. also Mr. Marshman's History of India, i. p. 283 (in 1758), and p. 328 (in 1767). Longmans, 1867.

tuguese, Dutch, and English, had each in turn lamented the exportation of their national currency in exchange for oriental luxuries. During the seventeenth century a single harbour of Western India—Surat—received, by the way of the Persian Gulf alone, half a million sterling per annum in specie. The quantity of bullion which the trade carried out of England long formed a most trenchant weapon in the hands of the opponents of the East India Company. Its amount was regulated by Parliament, and loudly deplored by patriotic pamphleteers. Until the middle of the last century, the Company's business consisted in sending silver from England, and bringing back Indian produce in exchange; but in 1765, when the revenues of Lower Bengal passed into its hands, it found itself possessed of an annual surplus large enough to do away with the necessity of importing specie for the purchase of its investment.[99] If a district yielded, as in the case of Beerbhoom, £90,000 of revenue, the Council took care that not more than £5000 or £6000 were spent in governing it. From the remainder, ten thousand pounds or so were deducted for general civil expenses, ten thousand more for the maintenance of the army, and the surplus of say £60,000 was invested in silks, muslins, cotton cloths, and other articles, to be sold by the authorities in Leadenhall Street. In short, the revenues of Bengal supplied the means of providing the investment in Bengal, and so the annual influx of specie

[99] Sir James Steuart, p. 56.

ceased, while the consumption of the precious metals went on as before. It was this annual influx alone that had enabled the province to bear up against the heavy annual drain on its currency; and we are assured that without it even the tribute to Delhi, not to speak of the yearly supply of bullion to the Company's factors in China, Madras, and Bombay, could not have been sustained. Mandeville, writing in 1750, states that the payment of the Emperor's revenue 'sweeps away almost all the silver, coined or uncoined, which comes into Bengal. It goes to Delhi, from whence it never returns to (Lower) Bengal; so that after such treasure is gone from Muxadavad (Moorshedabad), there is hardly currency enough left in Bengal to carry on any trade, or even to go to market for provisions and necessaries of life, till the next shipping arrives to bring a fresh supply of silver.'[100]

In 1765, therefore, these fresh supplies came to an end. The gold coinage, devised to supply the deficiency in 1766, only made matters worse. During the two following years internal traffic ceased, and the whole population, English and native, at length implored the Government to move one way or another in the matter. 'At present the distress is so great,' wrote the English inhabitants in 1769, 'that every merchant in Calcutta is in danger of becoming bankrupt, or running a risk of ruin by attachments on his goods.' 'There remains not suffi-

100 Letter dated 27th November 1750, printed by the Company in 1771 Financial Resolution of the 20th March 1769, etc.

cient (currency) for the occasions and intercourse of commerce. . . . The fair and honest dealer is every day prosecuted to judgment in the court without remedy, from the impossibility of obtaining payment from his debtors. . . . He is thus urged by his necessity to involve himself in expensive suits; he is forced to defend, in order to gain time, though sensible of the justice, and desirous to pay the demand; and he is driven to a hasty prosecution, in hopes to recover before judgment passeth against himself, though fully convinced of his debtor's willingness to pay as soon as he is able. His substance in this manner is wasted, and the distress which follows is too obvious and moving to need description.'[101] The 'Humble Petition of the Armenian Merchants settled in Calcutta' puts the case even more forcibly: 'The necessity of coin now felt in this capital, amongst the many intolerable evils arising from it, affects every individual to that degree, that the best houses, with magazines full of goods, are distressed for daily provisions; and that not only a general bankruptcy is to be feared, but a real famine, in the midst of wealth and plenty.'

The English merchants proposed, by way of remedy, to prosecute all who held silver, and would not give it in exchange for the gold coins at rates fixed by law. The Armenians took a deeper view. They perceived the existence of a real deficiency

[101] Petition of the Mayor's Court of Calcutta to the Honourable Harry Verelst, dated Town Hall, 14th March 1769, signed 'John Holmes, Registrar.' Quoted from the *Calcutta Review*, xxxv. 29.

which legislation could not reach, and recommended that the bullion in the country should be utilized by being coined. Silver was not to be had, but many capitalists held gold; and they proposed a general coinage of the latter metal into pieces varying from eight shillings to £1, 12s. sterling, not on the ground that such a currency would be in itself a convenient one, but because 'any coin whatever is better than no coin at all.'[102]

The Honourable Harry Verelst took the advice of these very sensible Armenian gentlemen. 'Upon a strict and impartial inquiry,' he wrote, 'we find that this scarcity of specie, so severely felt by the merchants here, is not an accidental or fictitious one, nor confined to Calcutta alone, but that the same indigence is spread over the whole country.' He goes on to express an apprehension, 'that either the revenue must fall short, or be collected in kind, from a want of sufficient currency;' and concludes by ordering a second gold coinage. But the English governors of Bengal did not at that period possess the data on which to base a successful currency reform; and although Mr. Verelst avoided the mistake of fixing the legal denomination of the new coins so egregiously above their market value as in 1766, he still overrated them by 5¼ per cent. The events of 1766, therefore, repeated themselves in a mitigated shape. At first the people very gladly brought their bullion to undergo the profitable pro-

102 The Armenian Petition of 1769, quoted from the *Calcutta Review*, xxxv. 28.

cess of coinage; and the Council congratulated themselves on the success of their experiment. But presently the public began to find out that, while the value of gold mohurs had been artificially enhanced 5¼ per cent., the value of rupees had been depreciated to an equal degree. They therefore withdrew the last remnant of their silver from circulation; and the driblet of gold coins that issued from the mint proved wholly inadequate to take the place of the national currency. Indeed, the native bankers, having learned wisdom from the losses of 1766, determined to be beforehand with the Government this time, and refused to advance sums in silver which might be repaid a few months later in gold coins bearing a fictitious value. Before the end of the year the Council found their treasury empty, and complained that the merchants had deserted their trade, and were 'locking up their fortunes in their treasure-chests.'[103]

Even those who held gold soon began to distrust the Company's efforts at a gold coinage. According to the regulations of 1766, a mohur containing 149·72 grains of pure gold passed for fourteen rupees, or at the rate of 10·694 grains to the rupee; according to the regulations of 1769, the mohur contained 190·086 grains of pure gold, and passed for sixteen rupees, or at the rate of 11·88 grains to the rupee. Native money-changers speedily detected this, and became afraid to have

[103] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, dated 25th September 1769, para. 39. I. O. R.

anything to do with the Company's mint. They knew that they could always get the market value of their gold as bullion, but it was impossible to say what liberty the English gentlemen might next be pleased to take with the coin.

It requires a strong effort of the imagination to realize the miseries of the next twenty years. The great famine of 1769, as the Directors have pathetically recorded, seemed to put a finishing stroke to the sufferings of the people, and the history of rural Bengal becomes a narrative of severities for wringing a constantly increasing revenue out of a starved and depopulated province. Warren Hastings created a security for person and property, such as had never been enjoyed since the Mussulman despoilers rolled down on Hindusthan. He framed equal laws, and he did his best to bring them within the reach of the people. He understood the Bengalis thoroughly, aided every effort to investigate their wants or to interpret their character, was munificent exactly at the time and in the manner to win their admiration, and displayed in all his public appearances that prompt, unerring audacity, so well calculated to overawe a race whom long oppression had stripped of self respect. More than this, Warren Hastings really loved the natives, and the natives in return loved and respected him as they have loved and respected no Englishman before or after. He was a true Asiatic prince of the best type; a man who a century earlier might have built up an independent

empire that would have held together under twenty feeble successors. But in matters touching the revenues he had a heart of stone. Menaced by the potentates of Hindusthan, all but overwhelmed by the Mahrattas, plotted against by powerful Hindu subjects, harassed by mutinous troops, bearded by his own coadjutors in council, he felt that his one source of strength was the command of money. Money alone would keep up his interest with the Court of Directors at home; money alone would maintain their sovereignty in Bengal; and any degree of fiscal severity seemed to him a cheap price to pay for the peace and security of all India. It could not be expected that a governor in his position would complicate matters still further by currency measures which, however salutary in the end, might occasion panic and confusion during their progress. From time to time, when accident brought home to him the misery caused by the debased and insufficient coinage, he devised some temporary palliative; but the only substantial reform which he carried through was the work of his first year of office.

Under native governments the mint formed a source of revenue;[104] a heavy royalty was habitually levied, and, when occasion demanded, the bullion brought to the officers for coinage was debased. In order to give the mint work, an iniquitous system had been devised to force the people to have the

[104] Sir James Steuart's Principles of Money applied to the Present State of the Coin in Bengal, p. 3, 4to, 1772.

whole currency recoined every year. For each year that had elapsed since the date stamped upon the coin, a heavy percentage was deducted, irrespective of actual deterioration. For example: a rupee that had been in use a year lost three per cent. of its value; after it had circulated two years it lost five per cent., and this, too, although it had suffered no change in weight or purity. To escape these deductions, capitalists presented their coined silver before the end of each year or second year, and so the mints drove a flourishing business at the expense of the people. As early as 1771 the Bengal Council had pointed out the remedy for this,[105] but under Mr. Cartier's feeble reign nothing ever received practical effect. In 1773 Warren Hastings, with his wonted contempt for half measures, struck at the root of the evil. He enacted that no deduction should be made from a coin, however long it might have been in circulation, unless really deteriorated; and in order to ensure obedience, he commanded that all future issues should bear one date, that of 1773, or as the legend runs on the rupees, 'the 19th year of the auspicious reign' of Shah Alam. This was the first step the Company had taken in the right direction, and it gave rise to so many disputes that Warren Hastings did not venture on another. The sufferings of the people are graven deep on every record of those days; and it is impossible to turn over a few pages of any public print, without coming upon

105 Letter to the Court of Directors, dated the 30th August 1771.

irrepressible evidence of the ruin and distrust between man and man occasioned by the debased currency. To cite only two instances from the first Calcutta paper. In May 1780 we are told that all the shops in the principal city of South-western Bengal remained shut for several days, on account of a dispute about the value of the sicca rupee,[106] and only reopened when the authorities yielded to the popular view. Not long afterwards 'Honestus' complains that the trade of Patna, the mercantile capital of Central Bengal, had entirely decayed, owing to the ruinous and constantly fluctuating exchange between the local and the statutory coinage.[107]

To such straits had a debased currency brought commerce, when in 1786 Lord Cornwallis received charge of the province. During his first three years of office, judicial and fiscal reforms demanded his whole energies; and in spite of the clamours of the Calcutta newspaper, and of more touching appeals from the rural population, he did not dare to meddle with the coinage. But he had in John Shore an adviser who thoroughly understood the magnitude of the evil, and before the end of 1789 the two friends had devised a plan for eradicating it once and for all. Suddenly an order issued depriving the treasury officers of any discretion in taking or rejecting coins on the ground of short weight. If a rupee was the genuine product

[106] Hicky's *Bengal Gazette* of the 20th May 1780.
[107] *Id.* of the 16th September 1780.

of a recognised mint, no matter to what extent it had been clipped or drilled, the treasury officers were to receive it by weight according to fixed rates hung up in the collector's office. This single stroke put an end to the indefinite and arbitrary discount which the provincial treasurers had from time immemorial exacted on all coin except siccas of the current year. Before they had recovered their consternation another order arrived, rendering them responsible not merely for the net sums received, but for the actual coin in which it was paid. This completed their ruin. Many of them had invested a fortune in bribing their way up to the post of treasurer,—a post which in those days yielded a salary of £40 per annum, and an opportunity of making £4000 more. Besides 'playing with the deposits,' varying from £5000 to £30,000, the treasurers had always enjoyed the privilege of deducting what allowance they pleased from each coin when they received it, and then of returning it to circulation, as payment for the mercantile investment, at rates fixed by themselves. But now these profitable operations came abruptly to an end. Lord Cornwallis divided the currency into two classes: the first consisting of the statutory coinage, to be taken at its full legal denomination; the second or deteriorated sort, to be received at the published rates, and sent off at the end of each month to Calcutta. The mere fact of some deduction requiring to be made from the nominal value of a rupee, he accepted as conclusive proof of its unfit-

ness to be returned to circulation, and commanded in every such case that the treasury officers should specify the rates at which they received the coin in an invoice to be forwarded along with the coin itself, to the Presidency mint.[108]

The treasury officers grumbled, shirked, disobeyed. In his first ardour for reform, Warren Hastings had issued a similar order, and they had managed to evade it. But they were now to learn the difference between a spasmodic although talented autocracy, and the persistent watchfulness of a well-organized central Government. During four years Lord Cornwallis had been painfully constructing that series of checks and counter-checks on the local officials which still forms a distinguishing feature of the Indian administration. Before the end of 1789 he held lists of the names of all natives in the Government employ,[109] and the rebellious treasurers found themselves suddenly entangled in a net of artfully-contrived statements, vouchers, and monthly returns. The slightest touch of his Lordship's finger crushed where it fell, and John Shore had taught him a sure method of reaching the delinquents. He seldom condescended to make any reference to the treasurers themselves; but he visited the English collector of the district with unsparing fines for the offences of his subor-

[108] Order of the 23d June 1790, forwarded with a letter from the Board of Revenue to the Collector of Beerbhoom, dated the 30th *id.*, etc. B. R. R.

[109] From the same to the same, dated 7th April 1789. Regulations of the 8th June 1787, Art. 18. B. R. R. and C. O. R.

dinates—offences which that officer had hitherto either winked at or regarded with indifference. Even Mr. Keating's fiscal ardour failed to avert these penalties; and when Lord Cornwallis found the treasurers trifling with his currency reform, he extended the system of fines, which had formerly applied only to unpunctuality in transmitting treasure, to every irregularity in despatching accounts or returns, and to every defect in their form.[110] For these mulcts and indignities the collectors took ample vengeance on the native subordinate whose delinquency had caused them, and the monthly transmission of depreciated coins soon became a matter of undisputed routine.

But though all resistance on the part of the treasurers was over, another and far more serious struggle had commenced. The debased coinage formed two-thirds of the provincial currency, and the very success of the measure for calling it in denuded the rural population of the means of purchasing the necessaries of life. The prices of local produce sank to nominal rates, not because grain was really cheap, but because money was dear; and the village usurers, demanding a settlement of accounts as usual at harvest-time, received the husbandman's whole crops in return for a pound or thirty shillings advanced to him in spring. In the large towns, where the statutory coinage more abounded, the calling in of the debased rupees occasioned hardly any drain.

110 Circular of the Board of Revenue, dated 20th September 1790 B. R. R.

and did not affect prices. The corn-dealers therefore bought up the whole grain of the country at the nominal rates prevailing in the rural parts, in order to sell it or export it at the prices prevailing in the cities; and the miserable peasantry, after reaping a good harvest, found themselves in the midst of a famine.

The urgent necessity for funds to prosecute the war against Tippoo intensified the distress. All the bad coin was swept off to Calcutta to be melted, while all the good coin was swept off to Calcutta for exportation to Madras. The triumph of the treasury officers seemed at hand; for no Government would dare, they argued, to strip the country entirely of its coin, and the currency reform of 1790 would end as the currency reform of 1772 had ended—by first causing a great deal of misery, and then being abandoned. For a moment the fate of the measure did indeed tremble in the balance. The crisis found Lord Cornwallis involved in changes that had unsettled the whole judicial and fiscal administration; a war which threatened the very existence of the English in India raged in Madras; a real famine was depopulating the Deccan; and would he now persist in creating an artificial famine in the one province which remained unscathed? But Lord Cornwallis considered that, after all, it was but a choice between two great evils. The suffering caused by the measure had far exceeded his worst apprehensions; but that suffering was now half over, and to yield would be to return for an inde-

finite period to the miseries of a debased currency. Besides, the suffering incident to the reform would all have to be endured over again. Fortified by these considerations, Lord Cornwallis turned a mercifully deaf ear to the cries of the people.

The winter of 1790-91 passed, but brought no relief to Bengal. Before calling in the debased currency, the Government had made provision for returning the specie when recoined, but somehow the new rupees did not reach the hands of the people. The old Calcutta mint was set vigorously to work, new mints were established at the three great provincial centres,[111] and the head of each district received orders to take all coins that might be offered to them at the local market rates, giving back statutory rupees in payment.[112] At first the people readily brought their debased currency to be exchanged for the new coinage; but the collectors presently found their supply of legal rupees exhausted, and had either to refuse to receive the local currency, or else to take it on credit. Then came the pressing expenses of war, and the orders, peremptorily repeated, to suspend all payments from the district treasuries, except the diet allowance for the prisoners, and the rewards for killing tigers.[113] The poor people had given in their little hoards of

111 Dacca, Moorshedabad, Patna.

112 Circular Order of the Board of Revenue, dated 2d August 1790. B. R. R.

113 Letters from the Accountant-General to the Collector, dated 15th November, 29th December 1790, and 28th January 1791. In salt or opium districts these articles were also excepted. B. R. R.

old rupees; when they asked for new ones in return, the collectors with much shamefacedness had to tell them that all disbursements were stopped.

On the 1st of January 1791 a hopeful but momentary gleam flashed across the political sky. The cumbrous, slow-working process of melting, assaying, and recoining had at last some visible results to show, and on the first day of the year an issue of 'new-milled rupees' took place simultaneously at the four mints. But the good news had scarcely reached the rural parts before another order came, more rigidly enforcing the suspension of disbursements from the district treasuries, and the people had the satisfaction of learning that their old rupees had been recoined only to be exported for war exigencies to Madras.

But early in spring the pressure, in an unaccountable manner, became lighter. The truth is, that the crops which the village bankers and corn-dealers had sent to the cities in December, or exported to Madras, were now paid for, and the price was flowing back to the districts in the shape of 'new-milled rupees.' The winter grain trade had realized unusual profits, and the rural capitalists had therefore an unusual quantity of money to lend. The borrowing classes profited accordingly, and every one who wanted an advance on his spring crops could get it. The crisis was in truth at an end; the calm resolution of the great English chief had conquered both in the Council and the field: a temporary loan at 12 per cent. rapidly filled up, the

local treasuries resumed payment, and the village elders, as they calmly sucked their hookas, began to question whether, after all, the Company's sway had really come to an end.

By this time Lord Cornwallis was at the head of the British army; but from under his tent in the southernmost corner of India, daily proofs of his persistent watchfulness shot forth to every extremity of Bengal. He had indeed obtained the highest administrative triumph. He had first constructed his executive machinery, and then breathed so much of his own vitality into it as to render it independent of himself. The able and conscientious men to whom he had entrusted the Currency Reform, no sooner felt the country a little eased, than they proceeded to measures to which the whole traditions of the Company's government in India were opposed. Its first financial experiment had been to affix a legal value to gold, with what results we already know; and Lord Cornwallis, clearly perceiving that the unregulated double currency lay at the root of half the commercial distress, had put a stop to the coinage of gold pieces in 1788 as an indispensable preliminary to his reforms.[114] During the terrible pressure of 1790 he had yielded so far, however, as to endeavour to relieve the drain on the silver currency by resuming for a time the coinage of gold mohurs;[115] but before the close of 1791 this pres-

[114] Order of the 3d December 1788.

[115] Order dated 21st July 1790, communicated in Board of Revenue's letter to the Collector, dated 23d *id.* B. R. R.

sure had exhausted itself, and Lord Cornwallis determined by one bold stroke to get rid, once and for all, of the perils of a twofold medium of circulation. One governor after another had failed in his attempts to make a double currency work harmoniously. The public was again pressing for further regulations and penal enactments on the subject, when a proclamation issued doing away with every check on the traffic of the precious metals, and declaring them ordinary articles of commerce. 'Whereas,' ran the document, 'various applications have of late been made to the Superintendent of Police by individuals, in consequence of the difficulty which they have experienced in procuring silver coin, to compel the *shroffs* (money-changers) to furnish silver in exchange for gold coin, and to punish them if they attempt in this exchange to value the gold mohur at less than what appears to have been its former market value: The Governor-General in Council has therefore determined, that in future the sale of gold and silver coin shall be as free and unrestrained in every respect as the sale of gold and silver bullion, and the exchangeable value or price of each determined by the course of trade, in the same manner as the price of every other commodity that comes into the market.'[116]

After a year's trial of the new system, Lord

[116] Dated Fort-William, Public Department, 18th November 1791, signed E. Hay, Secretary to the Government, and published *in extenso* in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1st December 1791.

Cornwallis decided that the time had come to get rid of the old defaced coinage by compulsory measures.[117] The public had been allowed ample opportunity to change its old coin for new 'without any charge whatever;' and he now ordered that after the first day of the Bengali year 1200 (10th April 1794 A.D.) the full coinage should be the only legal tender, and that 'no person should be permitted to recover' in the courts 'any sum of money under a bond or other writing, by which any species of rupees, excepting the sicca rupees of the 19th sun,[118] is stipulated to be paid.' In 1794 another twelvemonth's grace was given,[119] but the year 1795 saw the long-deferred triumph of the one strong will. The new and uniform currency had at last completely ousted the multitudinous, battered, and debased rupees which had so long afflicted the people.

In adopting the principle of non-interference, Lord Cornwallis displayed a self-taught knowledge of the science of finance, which England did not attain till a quarter of a century later, and which several European countries have yet to learn. Not till 1819 did Parliament do away with the restrictions on the foreign trade in bullion;[120] and up to a few years of the time when the isolated Indian

[117] Declaration dated Fort-William, Public Department, 24th October 1792, signed J. L. Chauvet, Sub-Secretary, published *in extenso* in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 1st November 1792.

[118] *I.e.* Rupees struck by the Company, whose dies uniformly bore the 19th year, 'sun,' of the Emperor Shah Alam's reign, equivalent to A.D. 1773, for reasons previously stated.

[119] Proclamation dated 28th June 1794.

[120] 59 Geo. III. c. 49.

statesman carried out his reforms, the Louis d'or continued to be rated at a nominal value by the French mint, to the stoppage of trade, and eventually to the complete banishment of gold from the currency.[121]

From these measures—which, so far as I am aware, have hitherto found no historian—the commercial development of rural Bengal dates. The Indian coinage remains substantially as Lord Cornwallis left it; silver being the standard medium of circulation, and gold, whether in the shape of mohurs or of the recently introduced sovereigns, passing as bullion at variable rates. But with the coinage unaltered, the currency has undergone a great change. Mr. James Wilson did for India under the Crown what Lord Cornwallis in his financial capacity did for India under the Company: he rendered the circulating medium equal to the demands upon it. To Mr. Wilson's paper currency rural Bengal owes the means by which she has been enabled, without panic or even inconvenience, to hurry along that career of productive energy which has been opened up to her during the last ten years.

Next to Mr. Keating's duties as collector of the revenues and Government banker. were his functions as judicial and magisterial head of the district. These last, however, seem to have given him but little trouble. So long as the banditti did not actually depopulate the country, and thereby disturb the collection of the land-tax, he had no busi-

121 Traité de l'Économie Politique, par M. Say, tome i. p. 393.

ness to interfere; when their depredations reached this point, he sent out troops against them. We have seen how energetic and successful he proved himself in the latter operation; but it is impossible not to perceive that the Company's servants, or at least the undistinguished mass of them—and to this class Mr. Keating belongs—interpreted their duties entirely from a fiscal point of view. Mr. Keating's ablest reports on the police are written not in his magisterial capacity, but as collector. His fears are not for the security of the subject, but for the realization of the land-tax. It was not a part of his duty to protect private property, nor did he attempt to do it. His criminal jurisdiction was limited to the punishment of petty offenders,[122]—a very simple process, not even involving a written sentence; and in the only case he deemed worthy of record—to wit, a jail outbreak—the papers disclose him rather as a vindictive officer than as a dispassionate judge.

The police still remained in the hands of the old native functionaries; and, contrasted with its abuses, the little imperfections of the fiscal and judicial systems vanish. It was divided into two orders: one charged with warding the frontier, the other with the internal peace of the district. Relics of both survive at the present day, but the first class has ceased to do any harm by being stripped of its official functions, while the second still remains as a plague-spot in the rural administration. The frontier police, *ghat-wals*, differed very much as to

122 Judicial Regulation, No. xxii. 1–5. 1787.

social status, but agreed so far as the possession of 'grants of land situated on the edge of the hilly country, and held on condition of guarding the *ghats* or passes.'[123] They consisted for the most part of adventurers from Upper India, Afghans and Rajputs, who were wont to hire out their northern vigour and trenchant swords to the aristocracy of Lower Bengal. Sometimes they pretended to a sacred character, and a curious although not very perfect analogy might be drawn between some of them and the religious knights of mediæval Europe. Nothing, indeed, overawed the wild frontier tribes so effectually as a union of the saint with the warrior, and the Persian records of Beerbhoom bear witness to the high value which the rajahs set upon a hermit *ghat-wal*. On one occasion the prince, hearing that a holy man had come from the north, offered him a sum of money along with a tract of forest lands in western Beerbhoom, on condition of his guarding the passes. The saint replied that he was willing to live on the frontier, but that he wanted only as much forest as would furnish sticks for his fire, and only land enough for a tank in which to perform his ablutions.[124]

In the old records the frontier police appear as hired soldiers rather than as landholders. Their tenure did not amount to a proprietary right in the border lands, but only to a right to receive a

[123] Decision of the High Court (Calcutta) *in re* Man Ranjan Singh *v.* Raja Lilanand Singh.

[124] Referred to in a Persian Ruidad of Ujja Alla Khan, dated 13th June 1848. B. R. R.

certain allowance, to be collected by themselves out of the rent of those lands; and vernacular documents speak of them as the *deputies*[125] of the rajah, not as his fief-holders. Their appointment, however, had a strong tendency to become hereditary; and Mr. Keating, reporting on them in 1790, states that 'all the existing *ghat-wals* have succeeded by lineal descent.'[126] On being called upon, however, to state their rights, only two came forward; and these claimed upon a tenure[127] which the courts, following the Mohammedan law, had expressly declared not to be hereditary, and one in which long possession cannot make good the original defect in title. The British Government, however, always willing to construe favourably prescriptive rights, while divesting the frontier police of their duties, practically allowed them to remain in possession of their privileges, though it was not till 1814 that the Legislature defined their rights.[128]

How this border force discharged its duties under native rule, Chapter ii. has disclosed. When the English assumed charge of the district, they found the hill-men free to roam in and out of it at pleasure, and during the Company's first attempts at internal administration the frontier police appear upon the scene only twice; in the one instance as

125 E. D. Darkhwast of Lochand Narayan Deo. B. R. R.

126 Report, dated 18th November 1790. B. R. R.

127 The tenure of Jaghir.

128 Regulation xxix. of 1814. 'A Regulation for the Settlement of certain Mehals in the district of Beerbhoom, usually denominated the Ghaut-waullee Mehals.' High Court Rulings, etc.

fugitives from the banditti, in the other as their leaders.

The internal police was administered upon a similar plan, and with similar results. The rajah divided his territory into sections of very irregular size, and placed each under the care of a native officer, whose chief business, judging from the records, was to assist the land-stewards in collecting the rents. To this end he had a certain number of troopers and foot soldiers under him, the main body of whom lived in quarters around his house; and the little cantonment thus formed passed under the name of a *thana*, and was sometimes dignified with a fort. The chief officer, or *thanadar*, was supported either by an assignment on the rents or by an allotment of land; in the former case he paid his subordinates in wages, in the latter by small rent-free farms. The thanadar's office, like that of the ghat-wals, had a tendency to become hereditary, but not to the same extent, as the rajah had him more under his eye; and however long the post might have been in a family, a succession only took place by a new and formal appointment. Besides the establishment at the sectional headquarters—the thana—one or more subordinates were stationed in each important village to assist in collecting the rents, to distrain the goods of defaulters, and to see that the ryots did not desert their lands. In unimportant hamlets these officials collected the rents themselves, and everywhere they seemed to have been specially charged with the excise and other

miscellaneous imposts which the rajah levied. In some districts they were paid direct from the thana; in others, as in Beerbhoom and Bishenpore, where the rajahs had maintained a quasi independence, and where Hindu customs had successfully withstood Moslem centralization, these village officials enjoyed small grants of rent-free land. They in fact stepped into the places of the hereditary village watch of ancient Hindu times, and in a purely Hindu principality like Bishenpore sometimes lineally represented the original families. But not even in Bishenpore was their office acknowledged to be hereditary, and on each succession a new appointment issued from the thanadar, as on each succession of a thanadar a new appointment issued from the rajah.

It will be objected that I am describing revenue officers, not policemen. The objection is perfectly sound; nevertheless my description is a faithful one of the only police then known. Under a vigorous landholder the thanadar's duties were chiefly fiscal; under an inert or a corrupt one he became a mere plunderer. The landholder, however, was responsible for the security of Government property passing through his district, and the thanadars were responsible to the landholder, so that they did in some respect perform the duties of a police. This liability gave rise to a popular notion that they were practically responsible for all property within their jurisdiction; but however the fact may originally have stood, the responsibility had been practically

confined to Government property under recent Mussulman rule. Lord Cornwallis endeavoured, indeed, to extend this liability to depredations on private property, but he failed.[129] Public opinion declared against the proceeding; the *Calcutta Gazette* distinctly states that practically the responsibility was a dead letter; and while Mr. Keating assured the Government that robberies took place every day, he attempted on only three occasions to enforce the responsibility. On two of these occasions the landholder was compelled to make good the plunder of Government treasure-parties, on the third to find and restore certain articles belonging to the Company's investment which had been stolen; but on not a single occasion was the responsibility enforced on behalf of private sufferers.

Nevertheless the province had paid annually the enormous sum of £360,000 for a police. It can never be too distinctly remembered that the treaty of 1765 only entrusted the fiscal administration to the Company, leaving criminal justice and the police to the Nawab, who received from our treasury £180,000 for personal expenses, and £360,000 for the maintenance of the courts and a sufficient establishment of police.[130] Until 1790 the Nawab retained the style and the responsibilities of chief magistrate. He left the duties wholly unperformed. Between 1765 and 1769 he did not even pretend to

[129] Even this attempt only applied to ghat-wals, not to thanadars. Letter from Board of Revenue to the Collector, May 1789.

[130] 'Agreement between the Nabob Nudjum al Dowla and the Company,' dated Fort-William, 30th September 1765.

do what he had promised: the regular course of justice was at a stand; 'but every man exercised it who had the power of compelling others to submit to his decision.'[131] Warren Hastings insisted that the Nawab should at least make some show of doing what he was paid for. In 1772, a Supreme Criminal Court was accordingly established in Calcutta, with a subordinate tribunal in each district; but in 1775 the Supreme Criminal Court returned to Moorshedabad, the residence of the Nawab, and continued there till 1790. The tainted air of the Nawab's ante-chambers stifled justice of any sort; eunuchs and concubines devoured the funds that should have provided security of person and property for the poor; and from 1775 to 1790 the whole criminal administration consisted in the sale of judicial places to uneducated and depraved Mussulmans, who looked upon a court as a secure den for extortion.

The Company had no legal right to interfere. Its duty, as fixed by treaty, was to collect the revenue; and the same authority that invested it with fiscal functions, had also appointed the Nawab to the criminal administration. Warren Hastings, with his usual determination to see justice done, temporarily usurped the right of supervising the Nawab's courts, but he speedily drew back; nor did Lord Cornwallis venture to touch this most clamant evil during the first four years of his rule. The Company not having the power to compel the

[131] Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors.

Nawab to keep up the regular police (Foujdari establishment), did the best it could with the fiscal police (Thanadari establishment), and soon the very existence of the regular Foujdari police was forgotten.

But in 1790 Lord Cornwallis attacked this last stronghold of Mussulman misrule.[132] He stripped the Nawab of his grossly abused judicial authority, contemptuously leaving his allowances as they then stood, and established a Supreme Criminal Court in Calcutta, presided over by the Governor-General and Council, and four Courts of Circuit, with two experienced English officers at the head of each. Offences too petty for these courts came under the cognizance of the English magistrate of the district. A Supreme Court in Calcutta supervised the whole. The Muhammadan criminal code, with certain merciful modifications, continued to be the law of the land, and learned Mussulmans sat as assessors to explain its provisions to the presiding magistrate or judge.

The new courts at first tried to conduct the criminal administration through the agency of the fiscal (*i.e.* Thanadari) police. It formed, as we have seen, the only police then existing, and it proved wholly incompetent for the duties now laid upon it. Indeed, it was doubtful whether the Government had any right to saddle the fiscal police with these new functions, and it soon became evident that the collectors had no power to exact their performance.

[132] Judicial Regulation xxvi. of 1790.

The Thanadars appear as frequently on the side of the banditti as on that of the authorities. Even the strong-minded Mr. Keating could not work with them. They were not, in fact, his servants. He did not appoint them; he could not dismiss them; he could not even punish them without 'a regular process before the magistrate,' and he bitterly complains that there are 'no written regulations for their general conduct, or to limit the boundaries of their authority.'[133] After two years of vexation, Lord Cornwallis saw that it was useless to give courts without providing them with executive machinery, and determined to construct a regular force out of the fiscal police. He divided the Thanadari establishment into two classes,—those who were attached to the Thaña and received wages, and those who were stationed in the villages and paid by grants of rent-free land. The first class he took entirely out of the landholders' hands, paid it from the treasury, and subjected it directly to the magistrate's control. But two excellent reasons existed for leaving the second class alone. In the first place, the fiscal village police in districts such as Beerbhoom and Bishenpore, had its roots deep in the national institutions of the Hindus, and Lord Cornwallis strove in every matter to adapt national institutions to modern necessities. They formed a genuine although somewhat transformed relic of the ancient village

[133] To John White and Thomas Brooke, Esqs., Judges of the Court of Circuit, dated 7th August 1791. B. J. R.

watch, and as such he was anxious that they should stand. In the second place, they would cost Government less than an equally numerous body of men. Their pay consisted of rent, that is, in holding a little farm without paying any rent. This rent was politically made up of two parts, one of which, the land-tax, belonged to Government; and the other, the surplus between the land-tax and the actual rent, to the landholder. In districts which had been brought directly under Mussulman control, where the so-called landholder[134] was merely the tax-gatherer, the legal surplus amounted to only ten per cent.; but in districts that had maintained or acquired a semi-independence, where the landholder was a real seigneur paying only a tribute like the Rajahs of Beerbhoom and Bishenpore, the surplus greatly exceeded the nominal land-tax. It was in this latter class of districts that the village watch chiefly flourished; and Lord Cornwallis very wisely, as it seemed then, continued a force to whose support Government contributed in so small degree.[135] The landholders retained the right of appointing them, but they were subjected to a certain slight supervision by the regular police, and hence indirectly by the English head of the district.

From the year 1792 these two classes of police

[134] Zamindar.

[135] Moreover, the order of the 13th October 1790 rendered the legality of increasing the permanently fixed land-tax by annexing the village-police-lands doubtful; the inexpediency of so doing it rendered certain. As to the law, cf. Decision of the Privy Council *in re* Joykissen Mookerjee *v.* the Collector of East Burdwan.

have existed side by side in Bengal: a regular force founded on the old Thana establishments, and paid in money, and an irregular force, the representatives of the old village watch, supported by small grants of rent-free land. Each has its defects, but the imperfections of the first class are accidental, and easily susceptible of remedy. The defects of the second are inherent in the system, and can be got rid of only by changing the system itself. In the first place, the village watch is now most unequally distributed. Railways and roads have diverted industry and population from their ancient centres into new channels, while the police have remained immoveable; so that an old deserted village is sometimes pestered with three or four watchmen, while a new and crowded mart has not a single one. In the second place, the village watchman is the servant of two masters: practically, the landholder has the use of him during the day, while all that the magistrate can get out of him are a few sleepy rounds at night. Third, as he owes his appointment to the landholder, and is subject to his direct control, he gives just such information to the magistrate as he thinks will please his principal master. Fourth, the magistrate has no power to fine him departmentally. If he sleeps at his post he must be cited before a court, witnesses must be summoned from great distances, a public prosecutor must attend, and the travesty of justice ends in a shilling fine. Fifth, nor has the magistrate any power to promote or reward, no superior grades

existing, and the whole force being in fact on one dead level of inefficiency. Some of these defects in the constitution of the rural police result from improvements in other branches of the administration, and the national prosperity to which those improvements have given rise. Others are as old as the system itself. We find the magistrates complaining in 1791 that they could not punish the police departmentally, and that every village watchman could enjoy the dignity without running any of the risks of a State trial.[136]

The sufferings which this defective system of rural police has inflicted on Bengal, would long ago have been put an end to had the rural records been studied. The Indian historian finds that in the ancient Hindu period each village had an hereditary watchman to protect its property and to maintain the peace. The Indian official finds a policeman attached to a village, and immediately sets him down as the old Hindu watchman, and as such hesitates to interfere with his office. But the records prove that the village watchman whom the Mussulmans bequeathed to us, had at best but a faint connection with the primitive ante-type, and in some districts no connection at all. He was not hereditary; he held his office from, and was amenable to, the landholder, not to the village community. His duties were to a large extent fiscal, and as an officer of criminal justice he acted under the direct

[136] Written in 1855, since which year a reform has been proposed, but whether carried out I am at present unable to ascertain.

control of a regular establishment—the Foujdari—with the Mussulman magistrate at its head. Between 1765 and 1790 the Nawab, who still retained the criminal administration of the province, permitted the regular Foujdari establishment to dwindle away; and the Company, having in its fiscal capacity the control of the village watchmen, attempted to saddle them with the duties of a criminal police. These attempts signally failed; but the village watch survives, in spite of three-quarters of a century of bribery, extortion, and abetment of crime. In this way a creature of Mussulman misgovernment comes down to us protected by the sanctions which are very properly accorded to the ancient Hindu institutions of the land.

The rural police, thus bequeathed to us, form an enormous ragged army who eat up the industry of the province. In Beerbhoom alone there are 8976 of them,[137] besides the regular constabulary amounting to 370, making a total of 9346 to guard a population not much, if at all, exceeding one-third of a million.[138] London, with between three and four millions, has, according to the newspapers, only 6500 police. In Beerbhoom, therefore, there is one policeman to every thirty-seven inhabitants; in London, one policeman to between five and six hundred inhabitants. In London, however, the police constitutes a *Force*, properly so called; in

137 Memorandum furnished by the District Superintendent of Police, dated 26th January 1866.

138 This number refers only to the Police Jurisdiction; the population of the Civil Jurisdiction is estimated at half a million.

Bengal the village watch are a mere mob, wholly ignorant of the *esprit de corps*, strangers to professional pride and the official sense of honour which that pride develops, not to be relied upon in any emergency, unwilling to exercise such detective ability as they possess, the plunderers rather than the protectors of the people, and oftener the abettors than the suppressors of crime.

But even this miserable police proved inconveniently efficient in those days. The Nawab had allowed the administration of criminal justice to fall into utter disrepair, and the watchman sent in more prisoners than the Courts could dispose of. More than one half the inmates of the jail were suspected persons waiting 'to be sent in chains to the Muhammadan law officer.' In some districts no tribunal existed to try them. They lay in stifling dungeons until a sufficient number accumulated to make it worth while forwarding them under a military escort to Moorshedabad. The infrequency of arrests indefinitely lengthened this period of suspense; and when at last the miserable gang set forth, it was with scarce a rag to cover them from the torrents of the rainy season or the chill damps of the winter night. Staggering under their chains, dropping down on the road from want of food, their flesh torn by jungle briers, and streaming from sword-pricks inflicted by their guards, they reached the seat of justice only to be remanded to prison until the Mussulman judge found leisure and inclination to take up their case. Even the day of trial

brought no decision: if they were innocent, the presiding officer had to be bribed, or he sent them back to jail to take the chance of fresh evidence turning up; if they were guilty, he ordered them to prison, but often without mentioning any definite period. Incredible to relate, a large proportion of the felons in the Beerbhoom jail were thus under sentence 'to remain during pleasure,'—a legal formula which, translated into honest English, simply meant until the creatures of the court had squeezed the unhappy prisoners' friends to the uttermost farthing.

The English head of the district was charged with the diet and safe keeping of the prisoners, but here his responsibility ended. What little he could do to mitigate their sufferings he seems to have done, and the records display a very humane supervision on the part of the Central Government on this point.[139] The ruinous state of the jail, however, led to cruel precautions against escape; and Lord Cornwallis, when he took up the question of prison reform, found the practice had been 'to keep prisoners in stocks or fetters, or to fasten them down with bamboos, or to shut them up in cells or close apartments at night,'—a proceeding which in a tropical climate amounts in a very short time to sentence of death. 'Not on account of the suit or charge on which they are confined,

139 E. D. with regard to jail returns, Letter from the Civil Auditor to the Collector, dated 25th January 1791; with regard to diet, Letter from the Accountant General, 29th December 1790, etc. B. J. R and B. R. R.

but merely because, from the insecurity of the jails, the jailor had no other means of preventing their escape.'[140]

It was not till 1792 that the Company really took the prison discipline of Bengal into its own hands, and the measure belongs to a series of great reforms on which this volume cannot enter. Nor does it fall within my present scope to describe the tedious and uncertain steps by which an effective system of civil justice was in the following year given to India. It is enough to lay before the reader the actual state of the judicial administration during the first few years after Beerbhoom passed under British rule. Those who have formed their idea of our early administration from the enlightened efforts of Warren Hastings and Sir William Jones towards the formation of Hindu and Mussulman codes, will be somewhat startled when placed face to face with its practical working.

For the records place beyond doubt that until 1793, civil justice was unknown in Bengal. The office of judge formed part of the collector's duties, and the least part. The realization of the revenue and the quelling of the banditti left him neither leisure nor inclination for hearing disputes; and, as Hastings well expressed it, every one set up as a judge who had the power to enforce his own decrees. A very few statistics with regard to a single district—Beerbhoom—will suffice. At that period the united

[140] Letter from G. A. Barlow, Esq., Sub-Secretary to the Government, dated Council Chamber, the 3d February 1792. B. R. R.

district was three times its present size, and contained not under a million of inhabitants.[141] There was then a single judge who divided his attention among six offices, each of which he deemed more important than his judicial work.[142] The united district has since then been partitioned into three, in a single one of which nine courts are constantly open for the disposal of civil suits, besides four others which have jurisdiction in causes connected with rent or the possession of land.[143] Until 1793 the Government allowed no separate expenditure for civil justice within the district; it now allows more than seven thousand pounds a year.[144] The total number of suits instituted between 1787, when Beerbhoom passed directly under British rule, and 1793, when the Cornwallis Code introduced a new order of things appears to have been one hundred and twelve, or, on an average, eighteen per annum.[145] Last year (1864) upwards of four thousand civil causes were instituted, besides miscellaneous orders and peti-

141 Mr. Keating estimated the population of Beerbhoom at 800,000, and of Bishenpore at 570,000; but he admits these were mere guesses. Letter to Board of Revenue, dated 11th August 1789. In 1801 it was conjectured to be 1,500,000.—Geography of Hindoostan. p. 29, Calcutta 1838. B. R. R. etc.

142 No cases decided by the Assistant-Magistrate as Registrar appear in the Records till after 1793. B. J. R. Regulation xiii. of 1793.

143 One District Judge, one Principal Sadar Amin, one Sadar Amin, six Moonsifs; besides one Collector, one Assistant, and two Deputy-Collectors for the disposal of rent suits.

144 Budget Estimate for the District of Beerbhoom, 1864–65. B. R. R.

145 Return furnished to me by the Civil Judge, dated 5th December 1865. B. J. R.

tions. If we consider the innumerable sources of dispute which *petite culture*, with its minute subdivision of property and multiplicity of tenures, gives rise to, each peasant having his own little set of rights to maintain, the latter number is by no means excessive, and the former number tells a sorrowful story of complaints unheard and wrongs unredressed. It tells us that, under our first attempts to do justice to the people of India, only one man in sixty thousand annually ventured to make use of our courts. Nor was this distrust unfounded; for of the hundred and twelve hardy suitors who invoked the aid of the courts between 1787 and 1792, only sixty-nine had been able to obtain a decree at the end of the last-named year. On the other hand, while 4489 suits were instituted in 1864, 4482 were disposed of;[146] and, practically, judicial arrears are now unknown in Bengal.

I am tempted to advert for a moment to a charge brought against the native character by two learned historians who have written eloquently about the Bengali without any personal acquaintance with rural Bengal. Mr. Mill and Lord Macaulay have painted the Indian husbandman as a very litigious, slippery fellow; the former gentleman never having set foot on Indian soil, the latter with such materials before him as come

[146] Another return, dated 12th December 1865. These numbers represent the whole litigation of the district, respecting both real and personal property, exclusive of suits under Act x. of 1859, which, for the most part, arise from causes peculiar to Bengal, and are tried by special courts.

in the way of a Calcutta official.[147] The statistics of rural litigation in England afford no ground of comparison; for in England only a small section of the community has any rights connected with the soil, and the litigation to which such rights give rise are proportionately few. In Bengal, on the other hand, at least five-sixths of the population have some connection with land, and are liable to the disputes which naturally spring from it. At the beginning of the century, Buchanan found that in the district of Patna, including the great city of that name, more than a third of the inhabitants were 'gentry,' *i.e.* landed proprietors, and that 95,510 out of a total population of 123,094 made their living entirely by the land. Throughout the whole province of Bahar the proportion was 730,157 out of 829,103, inclusive of the great towns, and exclusive of the numbers who joined husbandry with trade or handicrafts. The degree of interest which the various classes connected with the land have in the soil varies; but, generally speaking, three-fourths of the population have sufficient interest in it as to form a legitimate source of differences requiring judicial adjustment. In addition to this fecund source of not unhealthy litigation, it must be remembered that during the past seventy-five years

147 The laboured accuracy of Mr. Mill as to facts can only be appreciated by one who has followed his footsteps among the India Office records; and Lord Macaulay's Indian Essays—for example, that on Warren Hastings—contain hints that he must have derived from the Company's most secret archives. But neither of these great men had an opportunity of studying the rural population of India.

the pent-up litigation of several centuries has found vent, each class of the people having to discover by actual experiment what are its rights under our Anglo-Indian system of law.

Let us now examine the result of these various stimulants to litigation. The number of regular suits in Beerbhoom during 1864 amounted, as we have seen, to 4489. The population of the civil jurisdiction exceeded half a million,[148] so that in round numbers there is one suit in the year for 120 inhabitants. The average duration of life is much shorter in Bengal than in England; probably nearer to thirty than to forty years. Speaking very generally, therefore, and without laying undue stress on calculations based upon imperfectly ascertained data, it would appear that, of every four of the rural population, three pass through life without a civil suit.

If we turn from the rural to the general population of the province, the proportion of litigants is still less. The population is about thirty-five millions; the total number of civil suits instituted during the year (1864) was 134,393,[149] giving a suit to every 260 inhabitants; so that, assuming the average duration of existence to be thirty-five years, six out of every seven of the Bengali people pass through life without having anything to do with the civil courts.

[148] 514,597 in 1852. Survey Report, p. 43.

[149] Annual Report of the Administration of the Bengal Presid[ency] for 1865-66. High Court (Orig. Juris.), 1385; Small Cause C[ourts], 80,906; other Civil Courts, 52,102.

But, in truth, this litigation is only a healthy and most encouraging result of three-quarters of a century of conscientious government. While those who know very little about the natives of India pronounce them litigious, the magistrates who spend their lives among them have constantly complained that they cannot be induced to seek the assistance of the authorities. For the first time in their history, the people of India are learning to enforce their rights, and to do so not by the bands of clubmen, which are matters of memory with many rural officers, but by the regular process of the courts. That the litigation is beneficial, is proved by the fact that, out of 108,559 original suits, 77,979 were decided in favour of the plaintiff,[150] besides the vast number which were not prosecuted to judgment in consequence of the defendant privately yielding the claim to save further expenses. The habitual enforcement of civil rights is the best possible training for the temperate use of political privileges; and the trust which the natives of India have learned to repose in our judicial system, contrasts strongly with the period —scarcely seventy-five years ago—during which only one in every sixty thousand inhabitants annually ventured to ask the aid of the courts, and only one in a hundred thousand annually obtained it.

Turning from the quantity to the quality of the

150 Annual Report of the Administration of the Bengal Presidency, for 1865-66, p. 8. (Statistics for 1864.)

justice then administered, a still more painful scene is disclosed. The judges called for or dispensed with evidence according to the leisure they had for the business, postponed proceedings to suit their own convenience, and frequently forgot to take them up again. Many of the exhibits bear no official signature or seal, so that they might be abstracted or inserted by the creatures of the court at pleasure. When a case was put off, a date was seldom fixed for calling it again. It therefore resolved itself into a bribing match between the litigants, whether the record-keepers should remind the judge of its existence, and bring it on for further hearing. In this contest the defendant—who, as Sir Henry Strachey showed, was the wrong-doer in ninety-five out of every hundred suits—generally got the better; for, disgraceful to relate, the order of postponement *sine die* forms the final order in a large proportion of cases. Even when the evidence had been heard, the judge had often no law to guide his decision. The Regulations were irregularly passed, irregularly transmitted to the courts; and many an old letter from the Central Government alludes to laws which the provincial authorities, in reply, blandly regretted they could not find in their records. If the sole memorial of Lord Cornwallis' reign had been his order for the printing and effectual publication of the Regulations, he would have ranked high as an Indian reformer; and it is not too much to say that, before his time, a body of substantive law did not exist in a single district court through-

out Bengal. This, however, did not do so much harm as might be supposed; for matters were as bad as they could be, independently of the absence of law. The decision practically rested, not with the judge, but with a venal underling,—the decree being written in Persian, a language which not one of the district judges could read. Indeed, until the year 1789, I have been unable to find a single decision of the Beerbhoom court signed or sealed, or even initialled, by the English judge or his registrar.

But the obtaining of the decree was only the beginning of sorrows. During a quarter of a century every five years had seen new tribunals erected, and the successful suitor was dragged from one court of appeal to another, till either he or his adversary was ruined. It became, in fact, only a question as to which of the two could hold out longest, as the history of a single case will prove. During the anarchy which preceded the appointment of the Company to the fiscal administration of Bengal, the Rajah of Bishenpore died, leaving two sons. The elder seized an unfair share of the inheritance; and as no justice, either good or bad, was to be had in those days, the younger submitted. But on the establishment of the Company's courts, the younger son applied to them for redress; and after weary years of litigation and unstinted bribery, obtained a decree. The elder at once appealed to the council at Moorshedabad. The case turned on the Hindu doctrines of inheritance—doctrines still

intricate, and at that time kept secret by the priests; and the judge was an ingenuous stripling of nineteen,[151] with whom 'equity and good conscience' were supposed to make up for the want of a legal training and a total ignorance of the law. 'Will you believe it,' wrote Hastings, 'that the boys of the service are the sovereigns of the country, under the unmeaning title of supervisors, collectors of the revenue, administrators of justice, and rulers, heavy rulers, of the people?' From the council at Moorshedabad the case was transferred to the Board of Revenue in Calcutta, where a new set of parties had to be bribed, but where no final decision could be obtained. A trifling difference about sharing the inheritance had thus been fanned by long litigation into a deadly feud; and the Rajah of Bishenpore, in a formal petition to Government, designates his only brother as 'the enemy of my life.'[152] From the Board of Revenue the case went before the Governor-General in Council, who decided that all the previous courts had been in the wrong, and that the brothers were joint sharers of the inheritance. But before this decree was obtained, one brother was a white-haired imbecile prisoner in the debtors' jail; the other lay impervious to joy or sorrow on his deathbed.[153]

Even when the Government prosecuted, the delays were interminable. On the 1st December

[151] Life of Lord Teignmouth, p. 28.

[152] Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 15th October 1790. B. R. R.

[153] Acting Collector to Board of Revenue, dated 25th December 1791. B. R. R.

1791, the assistant-collector instituted twelve suits on behalf of the Company; on the 24th July 1792, we find him respectfully representing that in not one of them had a day been yet fixed for the preliminary hearing.[154]

Such were our first attempts at the rural government of Bengal. They do not make a pleasing picture; but this book, if it is to have any value at all, must speak the truth. Before passing any censure on those early English administrators, however, it is right to understand accurately what the Company undertook to perform. The treaties of 1765 vested it with the collection of the revenues, and this function it very efficiently and conscientiously discharged. Attached to the collection of the revenue, according to native ideas, was the administration of civil justice. This fact the Company did not realize till 1772; and notwithstanding the legislative efforts of Warren Hastings, no reliable system of justice reached the people till 1793. It must be confessed, therefore, that we failed to do our duty in this respect; but it should not be forgotten that we found no civil tribunals in the country, the ancient judicial machinery having disappeared during the anarchy which preceded 1765; and that, bad as our first courts were, they were better than none. With the third function of internal government—the administration of criminal

154 C. Oldfield, Esq., to Collector, dated 24th July 1791. Indian officials will think this delay still more extraordinary when they are informed that the cases were resumption suits. B. R. R.

justice, and the police—the Company had legally nothing to do. This department remained in the hands of the Nawab until 1790, and practically the English collectors interfered only when crimes of violence reached the point at which they endangered the revenue.

But the administration of the country was, after all, only a secondary and subsidiary business with the East India Company during the greater part of the period of which I treat; a function that had been forced upon it, or rather which it had been forced for the sake of self-preservation to undertake, and one which its ablest counsellors long regarded as a source of weakness rather than of strength. Until Lord Cornwallis gave a nobler interpretation to its duties, commerce and money-making continued to be recognised as its chief end, conquest and government only as two important means. Without some examination, therefore of its dealings and influence as the one great mercantile power in the land, our survey of rural Bengal during the second half of the last century would be incomplete.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMPANY AS A RURAL MANUFACTURER.

THE Records disclose the mercantile operations of the Company in full play. It managed its business according to two distinct systems: by covenanted servants who received regular pay, and invested the money entrusted to them without making any private profit; and by unsalaried agents, who contracted to supply goods at a certain rate, and might make what they could by the bargain. The first class bore the titles of residents, senior merchants, junior merchants, factors, and sub-factors. Their posts formed the most lucrative in the Company's gift, and attracted its best men, while its political functions were made over, as we have seen, to 'the boys of the service.' Warren Hastings himself—the first Anglo-Indian statesman who appreciated the responsibilities of sovereign power—did not venture to render the mercantile subservient to the administrative character of his high office. As a legislator his success was partial, but as the chief of a great trading corporation which had to pay an annual dividend, it was complete; and

when he left India, the conspicuous monuments of his rule appeared to be, not the administrative reforms which have given him a permanent place in history, but the weaving villages, filatures, and factories which he left in every district of Bengal. The influence exercised upon the people by these centres of rural industry has escaped the historian; and I believe the present chapter will exhibit the Company's trade in a new and not unsuggestive light.

Long before the Company deemed it necessary to assume the direct administration of the western principalities, it had covered them with trading concerns; and indeed the peril into which the rajahs' misrule brought the factories, formed one of the main reasons that induced Lord Cornwallis to take Beerbhoom under his own care. A commercial resident supervised the whole, and three head factories, in conveniently central positions, regulated the operations of twelve other subordinate ones. Silk, cotton cloths, fibres, gums, and lac dye, furnished the staple articles of the Beerbhoom investment. Mulberry-growing communes fringed the margin of the great western jungle, and every bend of the Adji on the south, and of the More on the north, disclosed a weaving village. These little industrial colonies dwelt secure amid the disorders of the times, protected not by walls or trained bands, but by the terror of the Company's name. They afforded an asylum for the peaceable craftsman when the open country was overrun; and after

the harvest of the year had been gathered in, the husbandman transported thither the crop, with his wife, and oxen, and brazen vessels, careless of what the banditti might do to the empty shell of his mud hovel. Some of these unfortified strongholds grew into important towns; and as one set of names tell of a time when the country seems to have been divided between robbers and wild beasts, so another, such as *Tatti-parah* (weaving village), disclose how the artisans and small merchants found protection by clustering together under the Commercial Resident's wing.

On only two occasions did the banditti venture to attack either the Company's workmen or their work. The first happened by accident; the second was the act of despair. A train of Government pack-bullocks fell into the hands of robbers while passing through the jungle; but as the drivers fled, there was no one to say to whom the goods belonged, and they were plundered accordingly. The Commercial Resident, indignant above measure, wrote to the collector. The latter replied in an apologetic strain, and the landholder on whose estate the misfortune happened thought himself happy in being allowed to purchase pardon by making good the loss. Probably the robbers themselves, on learning their mistake, had surrendered the property, for the identical missing articles were recovered.

The other occasion proved a more serious one. Mr. Keating had hemmed in the banditti on the south of the Adji; but thinking the Company's

name a sufficient protection, had taken no steps to guard the weaving villages on the northern bank. Under ordinary circumstances, his calculation would no doubt have proved correct. But starving men are not to be relied upon ; so one morning the marauders crossed the river and sacked the Company's principal weaving village. An outrage so unprecedented as this was not to be atoned for by apologies on the part of the collector, or by compensation from the landholder. About the same time the ancient capital of the district had been stormed its palaces despoiled, and property a hundred times more valuable than a dozen weaving villages destroyed or plundered, without drawing forth any comment from the Government. But now the collector humbled himself before the Commercial Resident in vain. The latter laid the matter before Lord Cornwallis, and presently a severe censure from Government taught Mr. Keating that, though the banditti might plunder the district at pleasure, the Company's work-people must be protected at any cost.

The sum spent upon the mercantile investment in Beerbhoom varied from £45,000 to £65,000 a year.[1] The weavers worked upon advances. Every head of a family in a Company's village had an account at the factory, where he attended once a year for the purpose of seeing his account made up, and the value of the goods which he had from time to

[1] These sums have been arrived at by adding up the commercial drafts on the Treasury. B. R. R.

time delivered set off against the sums he had received. The balance was then struck, a new advance generally given, and the account reopened for the ensuing year.

Mr. Cheap, the Commercial Resident, appears throughout in the light of a very important personage, and one with whom Mr. Keating, although not naturally of a conciliatory turn of mind, did his best to keep on good terms. Of longer standing in the service than the Collector, and less liable to be transferred, the Commercial Resident formed the real head of the district. His gains were unlimited; for besides his official pay, he carried on an enormous business on his own account. We find Mr. Keating complaining that he can barely subsist on his salary; that the mud tenement in which the collectors lived was letting in water, and tumbling down upon his head; and petitioning in vain for a single rood of land on which to build a house. Mr. Cheap, on the other hand, not only made a fortune, and bequeathed the largest indigo plantations in that part of Bengal, but meanwhile lived sumptuously in a pile of buildings surrounded by artificial lakes and spacious gardens, and defended by a strong wall which gave the Commercial Residency a look less of a private dwelling than of a fortified city. The ruins crown the top of a hill visible for many miles, and cover as large a space as the palaces, pavilions, and mausoleums which the princes of Beerbhoom had erected during two hundred years.

The Commercial Resident, rather than the Col-

lector, wielded the power of the public purse. Mr. Keating possessed patronage only to the amount of £3000 per annum, and all valuable appointments in his gift required the confirmation of the Calcutta authorities. But Mr. Cheap, as commercial chief, had from £45,000 to £65,000 to spend each year on behalf of the Company. The whole industrial classes were in his pay, and in his person Government appeared in its most benign aspect. On the Collector devolved the harsh task of levying the taxes; the Commercial Resident had the pleasant duty of redistributing them. To the then superstitious Hindu, Mr. Keating was the Company in the form of Siva, a divinity powerful for evil and to be propitiated accordingly; while Mr. Cheap was the Company in the form of Vishnu, powerful for good, less venerated because less feared, but adored, beloved, wheedled, and cheated on every hand. A long unpaid retinue followed him from one factory to another, and as the procession defiled through the hamlets mothers held aloft their children to catch a sight of his palanquin, while the elders bowed low before the Providence from whom they derived their daily bread. Happy was the infant on whom his shadow fell! For nearly a quarter of a century he remained in his palace at Soorool, a visible type of the wealth, magnificence, and permanence of the great Company; and an aged man, who still haunts the neighbourhood, tells of feasts which lasted forty days in those now silent and crumbling halls, where his father served, and where he grew up.

Mr. Cheap exercised magisterial powers, and the villagers, to whom an appearance before the Collector, whether as plaintiff or defendant, was equally an object of terror, referred their disputes to the arbitration of the Commercial Resident. Little parties arrived every morning, one bearing a wild beast and expecting the reward, another guarding a captured freebooter,[2] a third to request protection against a threatened attack on their village, a fourth to procure the adjustment of some dispute about their water-courses or landmarks. In such matters the law gave Mr. Cheap no power; but in the absence of efficient courts, public opinion had accorded jurisdiction to any influential person who chose to assume it, and the Commercial Resident's decision was speedy, inexpensive, and usually just. The Residency formed a bright spot in dark places, and the gratitude of the district continued judicial authority to Mr. Cheap and his successors long after the original need for it had ceased. Every landholder in Bengal held his *cutcherry*, and occasionally did justice between his tenants; but Mr. Cheap was the justice-general of the district, and Government, wisely recognising the value of such popular tribunals, but at the same time perceiving the necessity for supervising them, has conferred regular magisterial powers on the present resident partner of the firm which Mr.

[2] On one occasion the Collector had to indent for a military detachment, to bring in to headquarters a bandit whom the Commercial Resident had arrested by his unarmed influence.

Cheap founded nearly three-quarters of a century ago.

Besides being the channel for investing the Company's money, Mr. Cheap was a great merchant and manufacturer on his own account. The privilege of private trade had at one time been cruelly abused. In 1762 it drew forth a bitter letter from Hastings. Lord Clive denounced it in more than one philippic,[3] and by his reforms won for himself among the junior writers the title of 'Clive of infamous memory.'[4] Under Vansittart's feeble rule it all but suspended the government of the country. The Board of Directors wrote severely to the Governor-General about it in 1773; it was animadverted upon in Parliament in April 1782; and as late as 1789, notwithstanding repeated prohibitions, Lord Cornwallis found it necessary to interdict judges and collectors from being concerned in mercantile houses.[5] One branch of the service, and only one, had been excepted. The Commercial Residents, having nothing to do with the administration of justice or the collection of the revenue, had less opportunity of turning their official position into a source of extortion or corrupt profits, and it was held that public servants would make better men of business if they had a little of their own to

[3] Speech in defence of himself in Parliament. Letter to the Court of Directors, dated 30th February 1765. Mill, ii. 235, 236, 4to ed.

[4] Letter from John Shore, dated 3d December 1769; Life, i. 26.

[5] Letter from the Governor-General in Council to the District Judges, dated 4th March 1789. Circular Order from Board of Revenue, dated 6th March 1789. B. R. R.

look after. 'You will see,' writes John Shore, 'that we have continued the liberty of private trade to your Commercial Residents and agents. Depend upon it, that the true way to improve your affairs is to make the interests of individuals and of the Company go hand in hand.'[6]

With regard to Mr. Cheap's private enterprises the records are silent. He introduced the cultivation of indigo into the district, improved the manufacture of sugar by means of apparatus brought from Europe, and established a house which still flourishes, and whose brand bears his initials at the present hour. Something of the old authority of the Commercial Resident yet clings to the firm. The ill-feeling between landlord and tenant that has ruined Eastern Bengal is unknown on their estates, and an order from the resident partner has all the force of a legislative enactment throughout the valley of the Adji.

The Company, as we have seen, managed its rural manufactures according to two systems: by salaried officers like the Commercial Resident, and by unpaid agents who agreed to supply the investment at given rates. Of the latter class only one specimen existed in Beerbhoom. Mr. Frushard, a Calcutta merchant, had contracted for the supply of silk in Beerbhoom, and built a factory, protected by a moat and ramparts, on the banks of the More. The river then flowed through pathless jungles,

[6] Letter from John Shore to H. Inglis, Esq., dated 9th November 1788.

with here and there a little cleared spot, in which the mulberry-growing communes could barely hold their own against the wild beasts. But the high prices which the Beerbhoom silk fetched tempted them to brave every peril; and as soon as one hamlet was harried by the banditti or trampled down by wild elephants, another sprang up. The Empress Nur Jehan, during her residence with her first husband in the adjoining district, having taken a fancy for the Beerbhoom fabrics, afterwards set the fashion for them at the imperial court, and in India a fashion lasts for a few centuries. About the year 1786, therefore, Mr. Frushard determined to become a producer of Beerbhoom silk on a large scale; and by engaging to supply the Company, obtained, through its influence, from the rajah a lease of the jungle lands on the north bank of the More.

His story makes us feel that we are indeed living in a new age. The trials and difficulties which constantly beset him, with the political necessities which regulated his position, are scarcely intelligible to Anglo-Indians of the present day; and even the class to which he belongs has been for more than a generation extinct. From the day that 'the adventurer' set foot in the district, he found the whole officials arrayed against him. The natives charged him the highest prices for everything, and the Company allowed him the smallest. A sanguine, irascible man, ignorant of soils, a novice in dealing with the agricultural

classes, but full of energy, and firmly believing that a fortune was to be made in a few years, he entered into engagements without calculating the cost, and lived a laborious life with small profit. In the first place, he paid a great deal too much for his land. Jungle tracts, such as Mr. Frushard's, then let for 1s. 6d. an acre; but the rajah having a monopoly of almost the whole land in the district, managed to obtain 6s. 6d. from the eager Englishman, or at the rate of 16s. for the land really capable of tillage. The ordinary rent of excellent rice land then varied from 7s. to 12s.[7] Mr. Frushard therefore speedily fell into arrears, and the rajah complained to the collector, employing Mr. Frushard's non-payment as a pretext for being himself behind with the land-tax. The collector found himself powerless to touch the defaulter. He could not distrain the factory lands, or take out execution against its stock-in-trade, for such a step would interfere with the regular supply of the silk investment; and the presumption of doing a native justice at the expense of disarranging the mercantile operations of the Company, was a thing unheard of in those days. Mr. Keating, furious at 'the adventurer,' but afraid to take any step that would bring down upon his own head the wrath of the Board of Trade, poured forth his complaints to the Board of Revenue. He stated that, while the factory property was thus

7 Old Purgunnah Nerriks and papers furnished by the Court of Wards' Manager of the Hetumpore estates. Also Collectorate Nerriks. B. R. R.

protected from attachment, 'the adventurer' secured his person from arrest by living beyond his jurisdiction, and that, in short, he had no means of reaching 'that pai-khast ryot, Mr. Frushard.' Nor was the latter gentleman less clamant. His case even reached the Court of Directors, and we find Lord Cornwallis writing of him as one that deserves special indulgence in 1787.[8] The burden of all his petitions was, that the Government should use its influence with the rajah to procure a remission of his rent; a delicate task even for a despotic government to undertake. At length, in 1790, he declares himself wearied out, and makes one final appeal for relief. He had taken the land, he says, at an exorbitant rent; to this rent he had added the interest on the capital by which he had brought in the land from jungle; he had suffered heavy losses from floods; his filature had been at work during four years, but it had not begun to pay; in the past year (1789) he had indeed cleared the paltry sum of £200 as a return for all his capital, but during the current year (1790) he would not be able to make both ends meet. 'In a word, although for these five years forbearing from any place of public resort, and living almost in retirement, here I am, after a ten years' absence from home, with no hope to return, and with barely the means to live.'[9]

It was only those who drew the prizes in the

[8] Letter from the Bengal Council to the Court of Directors, dated 27th July 1787, para. 34. I. O. R.

[9] Letter, the Honourable Charles Stuart, P. and M. B. R., dated 4th June 1790. B. R. R.

lottery of our early Indian commerce who appeared before the English public. But no idea can be further from the truth than the belief that to go out to India in the old time as a merchant was synonymous with making a fortune. Those who drew the blanks never came home to tell the tale. The records disclose unsuccessful speculators like Mr. Frushard in every district of Bengal, struggling on against usury, sickness, heat, and malaria, rigidly excluded from the society of their official countrymen, and unable to afford those necessary luxuries which alone render existence in India tolerable to a native of the temperate zone.

It is fair to state, that while the district officers, and especially Mr. Keating, thwarted the unhappy Superintendent of Filatures at every turn, the higher authorities looked upon him as an unavoidable evil, and rather favoured him than otherwise. At length, in 1791, Lord Cornwallis, fearing to lose his services altogether, commanded that all his past arrears should be forgiven; that for the future his rent should be reduced by nearly a half; and that the collector should deduct whatever these sums came to from the land-tax payable by the rajah.[10] For the agency system had been found to yield larger profits to the Company than the more imposing operations of the Commercial Resident. It was conducted partly with the speculator's private capital, partly with money advanced by the Board of Trade.

[10] Forwarded with the Board of Revenue's letter, dated 18th July 1791, and previous correspondence. B. R. R.

The Company ran no risk. If the season proved a bad one the agent suffered, and the factory, built at his expense, afforded a material guarantee if he failed to perform his contract.

Mr. Frushard, being thus relieved from the exorbitant rent he had hastily agreed to, became a permanent resident in Beerbhoom, and soon a very important one. A pushing Englishman, with £15,000[11] a year to spend on behalf of the Company, and as much more as his credit could supply on his own account, and connected with the Government in a degree that his servants were likely to exaggerate, he had already acquired great influence among the rude jungle-communes. The collector's jurisdiction practically ended on the south side of the More. All beyond was forest and waste, and its scattered inhabitants had to protect themselves as best they could. In this uncared-for territory the presence of an energetic mercantile Englishman soon made itself felt in spite of official discouragement. He became their magistrate and judge, arrested robbers, freed many a village from tigers, and drove the margin of cultivation deep into the forest.

All this was as wormwood to Mr. Keating. It seemed to him that a non-official Englishman was a dangerous animal in a district: he had conscientiously tried to prevent Mr. Frushard rising when he was down; and now that prosperity had dawned

[11] This sum has been arrived at by adding up the treasury drafts. B. R. R.

on him, he tried to render him as uncomfortable as possible. The records prove that no protection was afforded to him from the district headquarters. The Commercial Resident could order out at pleasure a detachment of soldiers to guard his weaving villages, but the most that Mr. Frushard ventured to ask for was a few sepoys to convey to Soorie the bandits whom he had captured and imprisoned in his factory.[12] Moreover, Mr. Cheap's office compelled the cultivators to sow what crops he wanted, and he thus obtained his raw materials without having to buy land and farm it himself. Mr. Frushard, on the other hand, had to grow his mulberry bushes on his own fields, and by means of hired labourers (nij-abad), then a costly and troublesome method.

Mr. Frushard's assumption of judicial powers formed an agreeably permanent source of recrimination, maintained with equal spirit by the collector and himself The Board of Revenue failed to still the clamour; the Court of Circuit found itself equally powerless; and the feud, which a little mutual courtesy might have turned into a warm friendship, at length went up for decision by the Governor-General himself. Mr. Frushard complained that the collector, by vexatious arrests, dragged off his head-men 'at the most critical juncture of the year,' and rendered it impossible for him to fulfil the Company's contracts.[13] The collector

[12] Military Correspondence, p. 24. etc. B. R. R.

[13] Letter to the Judges of the Circuit Court, dated 17th May 1791, etc. B. R. R.

retaliated by charging Mr. Frushard with 'opposition to the authority of his court,' and with turning his factory into an asylum for criminals fleeing from justice. Thus the two pass away from the records of the period of which I treat, fighting to the last; no unfit types of the English adventurer and the average official of those days.

I am tempted to diverge for a moment into a description of the character and legal status of the early English settlers in Bengal. The materials which have accumulated for such an account during four years' researches in the records, are necessarily very great. But I have steadily endeavoured to keep in mind that this book is not about the English in India, whether official or non-official, but about the natives. It must suffice, therefore, to state that the pioneers of independent British enterprise in Bengal were of two kinds: 'interlopers,' who came out in spite of the Company's prohibition, and trusted to their connections, or to bribery, or to appeals *ad misericordiam*, for a sort of contemptuous leave to remain; and 'adventurers,' men of education, energy, and often of considerable capital, who had obtained the sanction of the Court of Directors before starting from England. Both classes were unwelcome to the local officers, and for two good reasons. The rural courts had no jurisdiction over the British-born subject; and even when the latter bound himself to be subject to them, as all 'adventurers' had to do before leaving Calcutta, it was found that practically the country

tribunals were powerless. The 'adventurer' might secure his factory from attachment by taking a contract for the Company's investment, and his person from arrest by living out of the district, or in Calcutta. This was precisely what Mr. Frushard did, and it does not appear that the rajah once thought of reaching him by means of the costly, and to a native mysterious, machinery afforded by the Presidency Courts. The second ground of objection to British settlers at that period was that somehow Englishmen require and exact a much higher class of administration than satisfies the natives of India, or than the Company was then willing to give. Even at the present day, the localities in which the English element chiefly abounds, obtain a disproportionately large share of the talent of the service; and many a collector who has administered a snug old-fashioned Bengali district for years, without attracting either praise or blame, publicly breaks down if called upon to deal with the questions to which English energy and English capital in India give rise.

This, however, furnishes a very strong reason why English settlers should now be welcome in Bengal. They force the Government to do its work well, and there cannot be a doubt that from the beginning the effect of English commerce has been beneficial to the people. The presence of a man like Mr. Cheap in a district made up in no small degree for the defects of the regular administration, and the necessity of protecting his com-

merce put some limit to the general insecurity of property that then prevailed. Another practical benefit of the Company's trade was, that very little of the revenue went out of the district. Under Mussulman rule the whole had been swept off to Moorshedabad; under the Company, nearly two-thirds were returned directly to the local circulation, in purchase of the staples of the district. In due time private English enterprise stepped into the place of the Company's trade; and though the surplus revenue now goes to Calcutta for the imperial expenses, planters and produce-merchants pour an unfailing stream of capital into rural Bengal.

The benefits which Mr. Cheap conferred upon a large scale, Mr. Frushard repeated on a smaller one. He spread a ring of cultivation and prosperity round his factory, and soon founded little tributary filatures throughout the whole north-eastern jungle of Beerbhoom. He seems to have been a very typical Englishman—too sanguine to be prudent at first, and too insular to sympathize with native ways, but eventually settling down into an experienced English planter, with that rough, paternal liking which almost every Englishman in a Bengal district sooner or later gets for the simple people among whom he lives. His factory, rebuilt several times, now forms the most imposing mercantile edifice in Beerbhoom. It is charmingly situated on a rising ground on the bank of the More, defended from the river by colossal buttresses, and surrounded by a high and many-angled

wall, enclosing a space large enough for a little town. The remnant of its ancient library still bears witness to a fair degree of mental culture on the part of its ancient possessors, particularly an *editio princeps* of Gibbon, six noble quartos, over whose pages, let us hope, the isolated 'adventurer' often forgot his squabbles with the collector and the floods that threatened his mulberry fields. His successors now employ two thousand four hundred artisans for the single process of winding off the cocoons; and if to these be added the unnumbered multitudes of mulberry-growers and silkworm-breeders, with their families, it may be calculated that the factory gives bread to fifteen thousand persons. Its annual outlay averages £72,000, or nearly half as much again as the whole investment of the Commercial Resident in bygone days, and the yearly value of the general silk manufactures of the district exceeds £160,000 sterling.[14] It must be remembered that this is only one of many staples. Besides Mr. Frushard's successors on the More, there are Mr. Cheap's successors on the Adji, with smaller factories scattered up and down; and besides silk, the district produces indigo, lac-dye, iron, fibres, and oil-seeds to an enormous value, not to speak of the large annual exportation of grain,—a branch of its commerce which still remains in native hands. It is this influx of English capital that has chiefly given employment to the increased inhabit-

[14] Answers to questions furnished to me by the resident partner of the firm. A cultivator lives well on £8 a year.

ants, whom long-continued security to person and property has developed. Rural Bengal has ceased to depend for its subsistence entirely on the land; and so, although the quantity of land stands still, the population may with safety multiply. Nor is it too much to say, that independent British enterprise, once so hated and suspected by the Company's servants, has now rendered it possible to give good government to India, without intensifying the struggle for life.

In forming an estimate of the manner in which the Company discharged its functions, therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind what it understood these functions to be. Until 1790, its avowed principal business was commerce, and this it accomplished excellently well. Its secondary business was the collection of the revenue, in order to yield a fund with which to trade; and in this, too, it displayed great energy and skill. Its third duty was the administration of justice; but seven years (1765–72) elapsed before it realized that this pertained to it at all, and during twenty-one years more (1772–93) its rural courts failed to bring justice home to the people. For the state of the criminal administration and the police it was not responsible, either according to treaty or in fact, until 1790.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now examined the surface of rural society in Bengal during the second half of the last century, and here the present volume must end. The picture will probably be displeasing to that large hero-worshipping section of my countrymen who have learned to believe that two great men—Clive and Hastings—suddenly transformed the Company from a trading association into a sovereign power. Clive did indeed win for the Company that power; but neither he nor his masters knew what he had won. Warren Hastings disclosed a deeper sense of the responsibilities of empire. He perceived that in government two elements have to be considered: the governed as well as the governors; and the first years of his rule are, from a legislative point of view, the most brilliant episode in the history of the English in India. But Hastings had not the power to carry out what he devised, and the India Office records of that period are a narrative of good intentions rather than of actual reforms—an Utopia which, while full of ideas that their author never was able to give effect to, fails to show what he really accomplished.

Yet these records form the sole materials from which Indian history has hitherto been written. Clive and Warren Hastings both accomplished great things with small means. But the disproportion between the means and the end was infinitely greater in the case of Hastings than in that of Clive; for many generals have vanquished great armies with little ones, but Warren Hastings alone, in the history of conquerors, set about honestly governing thirty millions of people by means of a few mercantile clerks.

In Lord Cornwallis centred that happy union of great qualities with the good gifts of fortune necessary for an English statesman of the highest class. His rank enabled him to demand his own terms from the Company; and he turned a deaf ear to all overtures, until it consented to entrust him with local sovereign powers according to law, as well as in fact. Had Warren Hastings possessed these powers, the reforms of 1790–93 would have been ante-dated twenty years. But in addition to his greater freedom from control, Lord Cornwallis found an able school of Indian statesmen whom Hastings had laboriously trained up, only to be parted from when they reached their prime,—a school represented by Rous in England and by Shore in Bengal. Into the brilliant future which then dawned for India I am not permitted to enter; nor am I careful to answer those who think it unfair to delineate the old dark days, without giving so much as a glimpse at the bright period which succeeded.

I have depicted the state of rural Bengal when it passed into our hands; and most educated Englishmen know sufficient of its present condition to have some perception of the difference. At a future period it may be my delightful duty to fill in the details of the contrast; but meanwhile, to any one who questions the benefits of British rule, especially if he be a native of India, I can only say, *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*

For, meanwhile, the Indian annalist has a much more urgent work in hand than to sound the praises of the English governors. The rights of the governed are still unascertained. We are conscientiously striving to rule according to native usages and tenures; but no one can pronounce with certainty as to what these usages and tenures are. As late as 1859 the whole land-law of Bengal underwent revision, important changes being given effect to, that plunged the province into a paroxysm of litigation. In 1865, after the new system had been at work for five years, the fifteen judges of the Supreme Court met together definitively to interpret its provisions; and in order to do so, they found themselves compelled to enter into questions of the most recondite history. Several of their judgments were antiquarian discussions rather than declarations of the written law; and however sound and beneficial their decision has proved, antiquarian researches, when they travel out of the statute book into the domain of unascertained history, form a very dangerous ground for judges to enter upon.

It is a work which ought to be done to their hands.

Several able men have already endeavoured to perform this task. One class has hoped to discover the rights of the people in the ancient Hindu code. But the doctrines of Manu or Yajnavalkya bear about the same relation to the present land-law of Bengal, that the Codex Theodosianus does to the present land-law of Turkey. Another class arguing from the fact that Bengal, although Hindu at bottom, had long been subjected to Mussulman rule, has sought for an elucidation of its tenures in the writings of Arabian jurists. But these excellent scholars forget that the Muhammadan conquest of Lower Bengal was never perfectly accomplished; that many of its princes were tributaries rather than subjects; and that the Kuran, the Hidaya, or even such works as the Fatwa Alamgiri, had small effect except within the radius of Mussulman supremacy. The real land-law of the country is to be found in those researches which were conducted by the rural officers during the first half-century of our rule.

In the next volume, therefore, I propose to inquire into the rights and legal status, as disclosed in the rural records, of the various classes who owned or cultivated the soil. An important source of evidence is the history of the great houses whom we found in possession of the land. The investigation involves a survey, not of the archives of a few families or districts, but of all the districts, and of as many as possible of the great families in the

province. Curiously enough, the latter formidable task has recently been undertaken by several of the leading native gentlemen in Bengal, independently of my researches, and it will shortly become possible to arrive at a definite solution of Indian tenures and usages. My own investigations point to an infinite gradation in the rights of the various classes interested in the land. In some districts the landholder was almost independent of the Mussulman Viceroy, and seldom or never subjected to his interference; in others he was only a bailiff appointed to receive the rents. In some districts, again, peasant rights were acknowledged, and the old communal system survived as a distinct influence; in others the cultivators were mere serfs, and one of the principal duties of the rural police was to prevent them absconding from their villages. This is the secret of the contradictory objections which were urged against Lord Cornwallis' interpretation of the land-law. At that time, as one of the Company's servants declared in the *Calcutta Gazette*, the people's rights were so little established 'that the inquiries of the ablest men have not ascertained them;'[1] and another authority states that no two men in the service took the same view of them. It fell out, therefore, that those collectors who had to deal with districts in which the landholders were the real owners of the soil, complained that the Permanent Settlement had stripped them of their rights and ruined them; while those who had derived

[1] *Calcutta Gazette*, dated 3d June 1790.

their experience from parts of the country in which the Mussulman system had uprooted the ancient houses, objected that Lord Cornwallis had sacrificed the claims of the Government and the rights of the people to elevate a parcel of tax-gatherers and land-stewards into a sham gentry.

With a view to ascertaining what analogy may be derived from the Muhammadan land tenures in Europe, I availed myself of one of those periods of ill-health incident to an Indian career to visit Turkey and the Danubian provinces. I found the same uncertainty with regard to the land tenures prevailing throughout the Ottoman dependencies as in Bengal. In neither Europe nor India have the Mussulmans succeeded in introducing a uniform system, or in evolving a homogeneous nation. The only explanation, with any pretensions to comprehensiveness, that I obtained was from Photyaris Bey, the Ottoman Minister in Greece, one of that little knot of enlightened statesmen in whom the future of Turkey is bound up. But even the acute Phanariot's account did not tally with the actual state of things in the remote provinces. According to a Wallachian nobleman, the *plenum dominium* centred in the great landholders; according to a Bulgarian peasant, the cultivator was the pivot on which the rural system turns; according to the officials in the large towns and the Constantinople press, the Government is all in all.

In this volume I have endeavoured to exhibit the ethnical elements of the Bengali people, and

their condition when they passed under British rule. The praise or blame of the English Government forms no part of my scheme, and indeed I am thankful that the administrator who figures most in my narrative, Mr. Keating, was one of those ordinary men who excite neither indignation nor admiration. He did his appointed work, and received for it his appointed pay, but he was altogether incapable of giving that interpretation to his duties, which can invest with dignity and pathos the long hot years of Indian official life. I am afraid, however, that I may have dealt hardly with our predecessors the Mussulmans; but it must be remembered that I am speaking of them in their last days of decrepitude and enervation. Of the ancient native houses, the true leaders of the people, I have yet to speak; and any one who judges of them from that dark period to which this volume has been confined, will do them the same injustice that is done to the population at large by those who mistake Lord Macaulay's graphic description of the Bengali, as he emerged abject from Mussulman oppression, for a delineation of the normal and permanent character of the Hindus.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

BENGAL IN 1772, PORTRAYED BY WARREN HASTINGS.

To the HON'BLE THE COURT OF DIRECTORS FOR AFFAIRS OF THE HON'BLE THE UNITED COMPANY OF MERCHANTS OF ENGLAND TRADING TO THE EAST INDIES. Dated Fort-William, the 3d November 1772.

Revenue Department.

HON'BLE SIRS,—In our address by the Colebrooke, dated the 13th April last, we acquainted you with the state of your revenues in Bengal to that period, since which we have closed the account of the neat settlements and collections for the last Bengal year, a copy of which we now transmit a number (*sic*) in this packet. From it you will please to observe that the total receipts, including some deductions written off to profit and loss in the Moorshedabad treasury, amounted for last year to sicca rupees 1,57,26,576 : 10 : 2 : 1; so that the Ballances[1] for that year are now reduced to Rs. 12,40,812 : 7 : 15, a great part of which we shall hope to realise; and we flatter ourselves that this reduction of the Ballances, and the comparative view we hope you will take of the Bengal collections for these several years past, with those of the last year, will fully satisfy you as to the favourable Success we have met with in collection of the revenues. The Moorshedabad books, that will be transmitted to you by the next ship compleatly ballanced, will further elucidate the statement of the last year's revenue, which we have now the honour of enclosing.

At a meeting of your Council of the 30th August, it was unanimously resolved to adopt the plan proposed by our President and members of the Committee of Circuit at Cossimbazaar,

[1] This letter is printed exactly as it is spelt in the original.

withstanding the loss of at least one-third of the Inhabitants of the Province, and the consequent decrease of the Cultivation, the nett collections of the year 1771 exceeded even those of 1768, as will appear from the following Abstract of Accounts of the Board of Revenue at Moorshedabad for the four last years:—

Bengal Year.		
1175 [1768-69].—Net Collections, ...		1,52,54,856 : 9 : 4 : 3
1176 [1769-70].—The year of dearth, which was productive of the Famine in the following year, . . .		1,31,49,148 : 6 : 3 : 2
1177 [1770-71].—The year of the Famine and Mortality, ...		1,40,06,030 : 7 : 3 : 2
1178 [1771-72], . . .	1,57,26,576 : 10 : 2 : 1	
Deduct the amount of deficiencies occasioned in the Revenue by unavoidable losses to Government, .	3,92,915 : 11 : 12 : 3	
		1,53,33,660 : 14 : 9 : 2

It was naturally to be expected that the diminution of the Revenue shou'd have kept an equal pace with the other Consequences of so great a Calamity. That it did not, was owing to its being violently kept up to its former Standard. To ascertain all the means by which this was effected will not be easy. It is difficult to trace the Progress of the Collections through all its Intricate Channels, or even to comprehend all the Articles which compose the Revenue in its first operations. One Tax, however, we will endeavour to describe, as it may serve to account for the Equality which has been preserved in the past Collections, and to which it has principally contributed. It is called Najay, and it is an Assessment upon the actual inhabitants of every Inferior Description of the Lands, to make up for the Loss sustained in the Rents of their neighbours who are either dead or have fled the Country. This Tax, though equally impolitic in its Institution and oppressive in the mode of exacting it, was authorised by the antient and general usage of the Country. It had not the sanction of Government, but took place as a matter of course. In ordinary cases, and while the Lands were in a state of cultivation, it was scarcely felt, and never or rarely complained of. However irreconciliable to strict Justice, it afforded a preparation to the State for occasional Deficiencies; it was a kind of Security against Desertion, by making

the Inhabitants thus mutually responsible for each other; and precluded the inferior Collector from availing himself of the Pretext of waste or Deserted Lands to withhold any part of his Collections. But the same Practice which at another Time and under different Circumstances would have been beneficial, became at this period an insupportable Burthen upon the Inhabitants. The Tax not being levied by any Fixed Rate or Standard, fell heaviest upon the wretched Survivors of those Villages which had suffered the greatest Depopulation, and were of course the most entitled to the Lenity of Government. It had also the additional Evil attending it, in common with every other Variation from the regular Practice, that it afforded an opportunity to the Farmers and Shicdars to levy other Contributions on the People under color of it, and even to encrease this to whatever magnitude they pleased, since they were in course the Judges of the Loss sustained, and of the Proportion which the Inhabitants were to pay to replace it.

Complaints against this Grievance were universal throughout the Province, and it was to be feared that the continuance of it would be so great a check to the Industry of the People, as to impoverish the Revenue in the last Degree, when their former savings by which it was supported were gone.

Though 7 Years had elapsed since the Company became possessed of the Dewanny, yet no regular Process had ever been formed for conducting the Business of the Revenue. Every Zemindaree and every Taluk was left to its own peculiar Customs. These indeed were not inviolably adhered to. The Novelty of the Business to those who were appointed to superintend it, the chicanery of the people whom they were obliged to employ as their agents, the accidental Exigencies of each District, and, not unfrequently, the just Discernment of the Collector, occasioned many changes. Every change added to the confusion which involved the whole, and few were either authorised or known by the presiding Members of the Government. The Articles which composed the Revenue—the Form of keeping Accounts, the Computation of time, even the Technical Terms, which ever form the greatest part of the obscurity of every science—differed as much as the soil and productions of the Province. This Confusion had its origin in the Nature of the Former Government. The Nazims exacted what they could

from the Zemindars; and great Farmers of the Revenue, whom they left at Liberty to plunder all below them, reserving to themselves the prerogative of plundering them in their Turn, when they were supposed to have enriched themselves with the spoils of the Country. The Muttisiddees who stood between the Nazim and the Zemindars, or between them and the People, had each their respective shares of the Public Wealth. These Profits were considered as illegal Embezzlements, and therefore were taken with every Precaution that cou'd ensure secrecy; and being, consequently, fixed by no Rate, depended on the Temper, Abilities, or Power of each Individual for the Amount. It therefore became a duty in every man to take the most effectual measures to conceal the Value of his Property, and elude every Inquiry into his Conduct, while the Zemindars and other Landholders who had the Advantage of long Possession, availed themselves of it by complex Divisions of the Lands and intricate modes of Collection to perplex the Officers of the Government, and confine the knowledge of the Rents to themselves. It will easily be imagined that much of the Current Wealth stopped in its way to the public Treasury. It is rather Foreign from the purpose of this Exposition, but too apposite not to be remarked that it was fortunate such a system did prevail, since the Embezzlements which it covered preserved the Current Specie of the Country, and returned it into Circulation, while a great part of the Wealth received by the Government was expended in the Country, and but a small superfluity remained for remittances to the Court of Delhee, where it was lost for ever to this province.

To the original Defects inherent in the Constitution of these Provinces, were added the unequal and unsettled Government of them, since they became our property. A part of the Lands which were before in our possession, such as Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong, continued subject to the authority of the Chiefs, who were immediately accountable to the Presidency. The 24 Pergunnahs, granted by the Treaty of Plassey to the Company, were theirs on a different Tenure, being their immediate property by the Exclusion of the Zemindars, or hereditary Proprietors: their rents were received by Agents appointed to each Pergunnah, and remitted to the Collector, who resided in Calcutta.

The Rest of the Province was for some time entrusted to the joint-charge of the Naib Dwan and Resident of the Durbar, and afterwards to the Council of Revenue at Moorshedabad, and to the Supervisors who were accountable to that Council. The administration itself was totally excluded from a concern in this Branch of the Revenue.

The internal arrangement of each District varied no less than that of the whole Province. The Lands subject to the same Collector, and intermixed with each other, were some held by Farm, some superintended by Shicdars, or Agents on the part of the Collector, and some left to the Zemindars and Talucdars themselves, under various degrees of Controul. The First were racked without mercy, because the Leases were but of a Year's standing, and the Farmer had no Interest or Check to restrain him from exacting more than the Land could bear. The Second were equally drained, and the Rents embezzled, as it was not possible for the Collector, with the greatest degree of attention on his part, to detect or prevent it. The latter, it may be supposed, were not exempted from the general corruption. If they were, the other Lands which lay near them would suffer by the migration of their inhabitants, who wou'd naturally seek Refuge from oppression in a milder and more equitable Government.

The Administration of Justice has so intimate a connection with the Revenue, that we cannot omit the mention of it, while we are treating of this subject in a general view, although we have already given our sentiments upon it at large in another place, to which we shall crave Leave to refer. The Security of private property is the greatest Encouragement to Industry, on which the wealth of every State depends. The Limitation of the Powers annexed to the Magistracy, the Suppression of every Usurpation of them by private authority, and the Facilitating of the access to Justice, were the only means by which such a Security cou'd be obtained. But this was impossible under the circumstances which had hitherto prevailed. While the Nizamut and the Dewannee were in different Hands, and all the Rights of the Former were admitted, the Courts of Justice which were the sole Province of the Nazim, though constituted for the general Relief of the Subjects, cou'd receive the Reformation. The Court and Officers of the Nizamut were continued, but their Efficacy was destroyed by the Ruling Influence of the Dewannee.

The regular Course of Justice was everywhere suspended; but every man exercised it who had the Power of compelling others to submit to his Dicisions. The People were oppressed; they were discouraged, and disabled from improving the Culture of their Lands; and in proportion as they had the demands of Individuals to gratify, they were prevented from discharging what was legally due to Government.

Such was the State of the Revenue, when your Commands were received by the Lapwing, and happily removed the difficulties which had hitherto opposed the Introduction of a more perfect System, by abolishing the Office of Naib Dwan, and authorising your administration to assume openly the Management of the Dewannee in your Name, without any Foreign Intervention.

In the Execution of these your Intentions, the points which claimed our principal attention, as will appear from the above Description, were to render the Accounts of the Revenue simple and intelligible, to establish Fixed Rates for the Collections, to make the Mode of them uniform in all parts of the Province, and to provide for an equal administration of Justice. In the steps which we have already taken, we have laboured to obtain these ends; with what Success will be seen hereafter.

The Regulations which we have before mentioned being compleated, and the Committee of Circuit appointed, consisting (as we mentioned in our last) of the Governor, Messrs. Middleton, Dacres, Lawrell, and Graham. We published our Intention of Farming all the Lands of the Province of Bengal, on Leases of Five Years, and invited all Persons to make Proposals.

The Committee first proceeded to Kishennaggur, and there entered on the Settlement of the District of Nuddea.[1] The Proposals which were delivered to them were expressed in so vague and uncertain a manner, and differed so widely from each other in Form, that it was impossible to make a comparison, or to ascertain the Proportional Amount of each; and the few only that were intelligible, contained very low and disadvantageous Terms. The Committee were therefore of opinion that these Offers shou'd be rejected, and that the Lands shou'd be put up at Public Auction, tho' contrary to the original Intention.

To remove all obstacles that might present themselves, from an uncertainty in the Bidders with respect to the more Minute

[1] Proceedings of the 16th and 28th June 1772.

Articles of the Collections, and the Grounds on which the Settlement was to be established between the Farmer and Cultivator, the Committee found it indispensably necessary before the Sale began, to form an entire new Hustabood, or Explanation of the diverse and complex articles which were to compose the Collections. These consisted of the Assall or Original Ground Rent, and a variety of Taxes called Aboabs, which had been indiscriminately levied at different periods by the Government, the Zemindars, Farmers, and even by the inferior Collectors. One of these Aboabs we have explained above; many of them are incapable of any Explanation.

After the Committee had made a through Investigation of the above articles of the Revenue, they proposed to deduct such as appeared most oppressive to the Inhabitants, or of a late Establishment, at the same time reserving those which were of long standing, and had been chearfully (*sic*) submitted to by the Ryotts, these being in fact a considerable part of the Neat Rents. Among the former were the Duties arbitrarily levied by the Zemindars and Farmers upon all Goods and Necessaries of Life passing by water thro' the interior part of the country. The Bazee Jumma, or Fines for petty crimes and misdemeanours, were also, agreably to the humane and equitable spirit of your Orders, totally abolished, as well as the Haldarry, or Tax upon Marriage, which yielded a trifling Revenue to the Government, was very injurious to the State, and could tend only to the discouragement and decrease of Population,—an object at all times of general Importance, but more especially at this Period, from the great Loss of Inhabitants which the country has sustained by the late Famine, and the mortality which attended it. These several Deductions in favour of the Natives, altho' the immediate cause of decreasing the Rent Roll, will doubtless in time be productive of the most salutary effects, as they tend to encourage the Manufactures and Trade of the country, to retrieve the loss of Inhabitants, to free the People from vexatious prosecutions, and by promoting the general Ease of the country, virtually to support and improve its Revenue.

In order to secure the Inhabitants in the quiet Possession of the lands whilst they held them on terms of cultivation, and to prevent such Exactions as aforementioned in future, the Committee formed new Amulnamas or Leases, in which the claims

upon the Ryotts were precisely and distinctly ascertained, and the Farmers restricted from making any further Demands, under the severest Penalties. To this end, and to prevent the Farmers from eluding this restriction, they were ordered to grant new Pottahs, or Deeds, to the Ryotts, the Form of which was drawn out by the Committee and made public, specifying the conditions on which they were to hold their Land, the separate Heads or Articles of the Rents; and every encouragement was contained in them to cultivate the waste ground on a moderate and increasing Rent.

Another principal Object with the Committee was to reduce the Charges of Collection as low as possible, from a conviction that the retrenchment of improper and unnecessary Expences opens a source of Increase of Revenue the most eligible, because the most consistent with the ease of the Inhabitants. For this purpose We have formed an uniform and regular Establishment, for all the necessary Charges to be incurred in the Cutcherries of the several Districts, under positive Restrictions that they shall not be exceeded without our being previously advised. This, We doubt not, will prove a great saving to the Hon'ble Company, as it will be the effectual means of preventing in future all superfluous and unnecessary Disbursements. And We think We may venture to promise that this Article will be duly attended to, as it will be almost the only Care of the Auditor to prevent every Deviation from it, in the Accounts which are to pass his Inspection.

After these previous steps were resolved on, the Lands of Kishenagur were put up to Public Auction, and a Final Settlement was made for Five Years, on an accumulating Increase, for the Particulars of which we must beg leave to refer you to the proceedings of the Committee, which are now transmitted.

During the course of the sale at Kishennagur, the Rajah of that place gave in proposals for farming the whole District, which leads us to the following general observations on the Subject of Zemindars and Talookdars in the Province of Bengal.

Where it can be done with propriety, the entrusting the Collections of the Districts to the Hereditary Zemindars wou'd be a measure we shou'd be very willing to adopt, as we believe that the People would be treated with more tenderness, the Rents more improved, and the Cultivation more likely to be encouraged,

the Zemindar less liable to failure or deficiencies than the Farmer, from the perpetual Interest which the former hath in the Country, and because his Inheritance cannot be removed, and it would be improbable he would risk the loss of it by eloping from his District, which is too frequently practised by a Farmer when he is hard pressed for the Payment of his Ballances, and is frequently predetermined when he receives his Farm.

With respect to the Talookdarrys and inconsiderable Zemindarrys, which formed a part of the Huzzoor Zilahs or Districts which paid their rents immediately to the General Cutcherry at Moorshedabad, as well as many others of the same kind in different parts of Bengal; all Arguments have been weighed, whether in favour of the just Claim Government has upon their Lands for a Revenue adequate to their real Value, or of the Zemindars and Talookdars in support of their Rights and Priveledges, grounded upon the Possession of Regular Grants, a long series of family Succession, and fair purchase. These being duly considered, there occurred to us only the two following Modes which could be pursued in making their settlement. The First was to lett (*sic*) the Lands to Farm; to put the Renters in entire Possession and Authority over them, obliging them to pay each Zemindar or Talookdar a certain allowance or percentage for the subsistence of himself and family. The Second was to settle with the Zemindars themselves on the footing of Farmers, obliging them first to enter into all the Conditions of a farmer's Lease; Secondly, to pay the same Revenue that could be expected from Farmers; Thirdly, to give responsible securities; and Fourthly, to admit a reserve in favour of Government for making, during the course of their actual Lease, an exact Hustabood (Valuation from Accounts). or a Measurement of their Possessions, in order to ascertain their true Value at a future settlement, shou'd the present Accounts be found to be fallacious, or concealments suspected. We have allowed a degree of weight to the arguments of the Zemindars and Talookdars in favour of their plea of Right, which, by adopting the first mode of settlement, wou'd doubtless be exposed to Risk; for as the Authority given to the Farmers wou'd reduce the present Incumbents to the level of mere Pensioners, and greatly weaken their claims as Proprietors, so in the course of a few long Leases, their Rights and Titles might, from the designs of the Farmers to establish themselves

in their Estates, the death of the old Inheritors, and the succession of Minors, be involved in such obscurity, doubt, and controversy, as to deprive them totally of their Inheritance. To expose the Zemindars and Talookdars to this risk, is neither consistent with our Notions of Equity, nor with your orders, which direct, 'that we do not by any sudden change alter the constitution, nor deprive the Zemindars, etc., of their antient priviledges and Immunities.'

Another argument, drawn from the conduct naturally to be expected from the Zemindars and Talookdars, weighed strongly with us, and proves an objection to adopting the first Mode. From a long continuance of the Lands in their Families, it is to be concluded they have rivetted an authority in the District, acquired an Ascendency over the Minds of the Ryotts, and ingratiated their affections. From Causes like these, if entire Deprivation were to take place, there could not be expected less Material Effects than all the Evils of a divided Authority, prejudicial to the Revenue, and Desertion and Desolation of the Lands. Whereas from continuing the Lands under the Management of those who have a natural and perpetual Interest in their Prosperity, provided their Value is not of too great an amount, solid Advantages may be expected to accrue. Every consideration then sways us, where it can be done with the prospect of the advantage before mentioned, to adopt the second mode in settling with the Inferior Zemindars and Talookdars. First, an equivalent Revenue may be thereby obtained, with security for its punctual Payment. Secondly, the converting them into Farmers establishes the Government's right of putting their Lands on that Footing, whenever they shall think proper; the Awe of which must constantly operate to secure their good behaviour and good Management. Thirdly, the Clause of Scrutiny, to which they are subjected, will also have the same Tendency, at the same time that it may be strictly put in force where there is cause to suspect Concealments, or a prospect presents of Increase to the Revenue.

Agreeably to these Ideas, the Committee at Kishennagur exempted the several Talooks in that District from the Public Sale, as the Possessors engaged to abide by such a Settlement as should be deemed equivalent and just; and an exact valuation was accordingly made of their Lands. It was, however, found

that the Terms offered by the Zemindar of Kishennagur, as before mentioned, were not equivalent to the expectations the Committee had reason to Entertain from the Public Auction of the separate Farms, and the Faith of Government having already been engaged to such Farmers whose offers had been formally accepted. For these Reasons, joined with the well-known*subtle and faithless character of the Zemindar, it was determined to reject his proposals, and to give the Preference to the offer of the Farmers, which were more advantageous to Government.

The Settlement of Kishennagur being concluded, a fixed Dewan was chosen by the Committee to be joined with the Collector in the Superintendancy of the Revenues, conformably to our Established Regulations before referred to; and instructions were accordingly given him for his guidance.

We have been thus explicit in relating the Transactions at Kishenagur, both as these will serve to point out the various effects of our previous Determinations, as well as the Motives which gave Occasion to those which were superadded by the Committee, from local or general Observation, and to convey an Idea of the Plan on which the settlement of the whole Province will be formed, of which that of Kishenagur may be regarded as the Model.

From Kishenagur the Committee proceeded to Cossimbazaar, and arrived there the beginning of July. One of their first objects was the regulating the Nabob's Household and Stipend, and the appointing of the necessary Officers for the Management of his Affairs. But as these Matters will be fully discussed in our Letter from the General Department, We shall confine this Address solely to the current Business of the Revenue.

The Province of Radshahy and the Huzzoor Zilahs were taken next into Consideration, and the same Regulations established previous to their Settlement, as at Kisenagur. Public Advertisements being made for receiving Proposals for farming the different Purgunnahs in Radshahy, and a proper time limited for their delivery, the terms given in for the whole of the Western Division were examined, and the Offers of the Farmers and Zemindar accurately compared. Those of the latter were found more advantageous to Government. A settlement for five years was accordingly concluded with the Ranny Bowanny, the Zemindar of that District, whose Substance, Credit, and Character

rendered the Conditions of her Offer the more desireable, especially as she consented to the Committee's Plan of subdividing the Lands into fourteen Lots or Farms, and engaged to deposit the Farmer's Cabooleats or Agreements as a Collateral Security with her own, for the punctual Payment of her Rents. No other Proposals being given in for the Eastern Division of Radshahy, it was in like manner farmed to the zemindar, whose Knowledge of, and long-established Reputation in, the Country enabled her to make more advantageous Offers for this also than any other person; and We doubt not that We shall realize the whole of the Revenue from these important and extensive Districts, which will receive an additional Advantage, besides a Reduction of the Expence of the Collections, in being thus united under the hereditary and ancient Proprietor.

For the particular Reasons and Arguments urged in our several Proceedings, referred to in the margin, and which will be farther treated on in our Letter from the other Department, you will observe that We have found it expedient to annex to Mr. Middleton's Appointment of Resident of the Durbar and Chief of Cossimbazar, the Superintendency of the Collections of Radshahy, in the conducting of which, the whole being put under the immediate Management of the Zemindar, his only care as Collector will be to receive the monthly Kists as they may become due, to attend to the Complaints and Representations of the Ryotts, and to see that the Regulations which have been made are duly adhered to.

The Huzzoor Zillahs, and the inferior Zemindaries and Talookdaries bordering on Moorshedabad and Rajshahy, were also settled on the same Plan, a Preference being always given to the Offers of the Hereditary Possessors as before observed. But as it would take up too much of your Time to descend to a minute Detail of these numerous Settlements, we must take the Liberty of referring you to the Proceedings of the late Committee of Circuit. You will therein notice that we have appointed five additional Collectors to superintend the Revenue of those Districts. It was with some reluctance we found ourselves under the necessity of increasing the Number of these Appointments. They were rendered unavoidable by the Intricacy of those parts of the Huzzoor Zilahs, which have been thus distributed amongst them; but We hope that the Liberty which We have given to the

Farmers, who may be so disposed, to pay their Rents immediately to the Sudder or Head Cutcherry, will in time enable us to reduce these Establishments.

In the Intervals of Public Business, the Committee were employed in deliberating on the steps referred to them, which were proper to be taken for carrying into Execution your late Orders by the Lapwing, where you declare your Intention of Standing forth as Dewan by the Agency of the Company's Servants, to assume the 'entire Management of the Revenues,' leaving it to us to plan and execute this important Work, 'by adopting such Regulations, and pursuing such Measures, as should at once insure to the Company every possible Advantage.'

The first Consideration was whether the Board of Revenue at Moorshedabad should be abolished, and the Business of the Collections in all its Branches, put under the management of the Members of your Administration at the Presidency; and after allowing due Weight to every Argument that occurred, We agreed unimously with the Committee in the Necessity of this last Measure, which has accordingly been since carried into Execution. We take the Liberty of laying before you the Grounds upon which we have ventured to make this Alteration, in the flattering hopes that it will meet with your approval.

As the Administration of Justice, and the Collection of the Revenue, are by far the most important object of Government, they certainly claim the first Attention of your President and Council, especially at a time when so many weighty matters, intimately connected with them, are entrusted by you to our Investigation and Judgment, and when the State of the Country requires timely, well-digested, and spirited Measures. While the Controuling and Executive Part of the Revenue, and the correspondence with the Collectors, was carried by a Council at Moorshedabad, the Members of your Administration had not an opportunity of acquiring that thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the Revenue, which can only result from practical Experience. But as your late orders tend to establish a new System, enjoin many new Regulations and Enquiries which could not properly be delegated to a Subordinate Council, it became absolutely necessary that the Business of the Revenue should be conducted under our immediate Observation and Direction.

This change, We trust, will afford great Relief to the Inhabit-

ants of the Provinces, in opening to them a more ready Access to Justice, insomuch that Appeals from the Decisions of the Inferior Courts may now be made directly to the Presidency, whereas formerly they were first transmitted to the Council at Moorshedabad, and from thence an Appeal lay to Us.

Another good Consequence will be the great Increase of Inhabitants, and of Wealth in Calcutta, which will not only add to the Consumption of our most valuable Manufactures imported from home, but will be the means of conveying to the Natives a more intimate Knowledge of our Customs and Manners, and of conciliating them to our Policy and Government

Besides the Reasons above urged for the Dissolution of the Council at Moorshedabad, We must beg leave to add this farther Argument, in reply to the objection which may possibly be made to it as repugnant to your Commands of the 30th June 1769. We now conceive them, however, to be superseded by your later Orders and the Discretionary Power you have given us in your letter by the Lapwing. Nevertheless, we should have thought ourselves indispensably bound to have adhered to the Spirit of them, so far as they could be made to coincide with the new System of the Dewanny, but we found them totally subverted by it.

While Moorshedabad remained the Seat of your Collections, every consideration required the Establishment of a Council to Superintend them, as it was a trust every way too great for an individual. On these grounds alone we presumed your Orders for forming such Councils at Moorshedabad and Patna were framed. But when the office of Naib Dwan was abolished, and you had declared your Resolution to place the Collections under the immediate charge of your own Servants, there remained no Reason for continuing that Department of the Revenue at such a distance from the Observation of your Governor and Council; and the Removal of the Collection to the Presidency, as it left no Business for an inferior Council, of course rendered their continuance, and the charges attending such an establishment, needless. We will indulge ourselves, therefore, with another Hope, that an annual saving of some Lacks of Rupees will be derived from this alteration, altho' We are well aware of the Expence and Inconvenience which ever attends Innovations of all kinds on their first Institution.

As the Reasons for the Removal of the Khalsa are treated on very largely in the Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit of 28th July, and contain many Observations on the Nature of the Revenue in general, which are too voluminous to be inserted in the Body of this Letter, we wish to recommend these to your particular attention.

The Plan which we have formed for conducting the Business of the Khalsa, or Superior Office of the Collections, will go a Number in the Packet.

The more regular Administration of Justice was also deliberated on by the Committee of Circuit, and a Plan was formed by them which afterwards met with our Approbation. We cannot give you a better Idea of the Grounds on which this was framed, than by referring you to a Copy of it, together with a Letter from the Committee to the Board on the Occasion, both of which make Numbers in this Packet; and we earnestly recommend them to your Perusal, requesting to be assisted with such further Orders and Instructions thereon as they may require for compleating the system, which we have thus endeavoured to establish on the most equitable, solid, and permanent footing. We hope they will be read with that Indulgence which We are humbly of Opinion is due to a Work of this kind, undertaken on the plain Principles of Experience and common Observation, without the advantages which an intimate Knowledge of the Theory of Law might have afforded us. We have endeavoured to adapt our Regulations to the Manners and Understanding of the People, and Exegencies of the Country, adhering, as closely as We were able, to their Antient Usages and Institutions. It will be still a Work of some Months, We fear, before they can be thoroughly established throughout the Provinces; but We shall think our Labors amply recompensed if they meet with your Approbation, and are productive of the good Effects we had in view.

Our President returned to Calcutta about the middle of September. Mr. Middleton remained at Moorshedabad to take charge of his Appointments, and the other three Members of the Committee of Circuit proceeded to Dacca, where they are now employed in making the Settlement of that Province and the adjacent Districts, after which they will continue their Tour to the remaining Divisions on the Eastern Side of Bengal; and We

hope to transmit the further Particulars of their Proceedings by one of the Ships of this Season, together with a Compleat Statement of your Revenue for the following five Years.

Besides the General Plan before mentioned for regulating the New System of conducting the Revenues, and the several other Points therein referred to, the Committee of Revenue at the Presidency, composed of the remaining Members of your Council, were employed in preparing the Settlements of the Districts of Hougly, Midnapore, Beerbhoom, Jessore, and the Calcutta Lands. These, together with the Districts allotted to the Committee of Circuit, compleat the whole of Bengal, excepting Burdwan, where the Lands are already lett in Farm, on Leases of five years, which do not expire till the end of the Bengal year 1182 (A.D. 1775).

In consequence of the Public Advertisement for making the Settlement of Hougly, a number of Proposals for farming the Lands were delivered in; and after an exact scrutiny was made into them, those which appeared to be the most advantageous to Government were accepted. It was originally intended to have lett them in small Farms; but the Offers for large Lots being much higher than the others, We were tempted to prefer them. There were likewise many Talookdarries and petty Zemindarries in this District, the Possessors of which represented to us the Length of Time they had held their Lands, and the wretched condition they would be reduced to were they now to be deprived of them. As they engaged to pay to Government an increased Rent in proportion to their value, We were induced by the same Motives as actuated the Committee of Circuit in similar Instances to continue to them their hereditary Possessions. In one or two of the Purgunnas some Deductions were found necessary to be made, on account of the particular degree in which they had suffered by the late Famine; but a favourable increase being added to the other Purgannas, We have reason to be satisfied with the good success which has attended the Settlement of Houghly and its Dependancies.

The Settlement of Beerbhoom, Bissenpoor, and Pacheat has also been effected upon an increasing Revenue, on a Plan similar to the other Farmed Lands.

The Districts of Jessore and Mahomed Shahy are Settled on Terms advantageous to Government, as appears by the Accounts

delivered in by Mr. Lane, a Member of our Board, who was deputed to accomplish that Business; and a full Representation of his Proceedings is recorded on (*sic*) our Consultation of the 10th of August.

By the Proceedings it appears that the Calcutta Lands have been compleatly farmed; but as some of the Farmers have flown off from their Engagements and absconded, and the Execution of the Title Deeds with the rest is delayed, We have hitherto been prevented from finally adjusting this Business. We shall therefore defer transmitting a further Statement of these Lands till the next Ship, as well as that of Midnapoor, the settlement of which is now in great forwardness.

In pursuance of your positive Injunctions, We have been endeavouring for some time past to collect the fullest Information concerning the Salt Business in Bengal, that we may be enabled to form such Regulations as shall appear the best calculated for securing the Duties of Government upon that article, and for the general Benefit of the Trade. For our Proceedings in these Matters, so far as we have hitherto been able to effect, we refer you to the Consultations now transmitted, and particularly to that of the 7th October. And as this subject is one of the first that will fall under our Consideration, We expect in our next Advices to furnish you with a Compleat State of it.

The Hougly disputed Ballancies of Salt, which have been a Matter of Contention and Difficulty for these two years past, We have at length happily adjusted, as recorded in our Proceedings of the 1st of October.

The Bukshbunder or Customs at Hougly, as well as those of the Pachetra at Moorshedabad, have not been lett to farm, but continue to be collected by the Officers of Government, in order that no Obstacles may occur in New-modelling this Source of your Revenue agreeably to your Instructions. At present we wait for Advices and further Lights from the Committee of Circuit at Dacca concerning the Shawbunder, or Head Custom House, in that District. Being furnished with these, We shall proceed to form one general and uniform Plan for the Collection of Duties, which will be duly transmitted for your Information.

The humane Attention shown in your Commands of the 30th June 1769, and recommended in many of your Letters since that

Date, to the Rights of the Zemindars who have inherited Lands from their Ancestors, encourages us to solicit your Compassion for the antient Proprietors of the Twenty-four Pergunnas, or Calcutta Lands, which became the Company's Zemindarry by the Treaty of Plassey, and from which they were consequently dispossessed. A small Part of their Lands were before that Time united with the Zemindarries of Burdwan and Nuddea, whose Zemindars are amply provided for. The other Zemindars and Taalindars (*sic*) have continued since that Time in a State of extreme Indigence. Some of them have large families to maintain. It has been the usual Rule of the Mogul Government, when any Zemindar was divested of authority, to allow him a Substance out of the Rents of his Zemindarrie proportioned to the annual Income of it. This Proportion commonly ammounted to One Tenth. We would not recommend so large an Allowance for these people. We are persuaded that they will be contented with a much more moderate income, and receive it with Gratitude. As this Indulgence has been extended to all the other Zemindars in both the Provinces since they were placed under your Government, We have judged that this Representation of the Case of those who alone have been excluded from it would not be unacceptable to you.

As the Settlement of the Province of Bahar had been made for a Term of Years, and therefore did not require any immediate Alteration, We shall wait to finish the whole of our Regulations in Bengal before we attempt any Innovation in that Province. The only point on which We think We can give you any previous Intimation of our future Proceedings in those Parts is, that we deem it proper to unite the Collections with those of Bengal, and establish the same Regulations in both Provinces, as soon as We can do it with conveniency, and without adding to our present Embarrassments.

In the Proceedings of our Committee of Revenue of the 10th May is recorded the Particulars of a Dispute which subsisted between the late Council of Revenue at Moorshedabad and the Supervisor of Dinagepore, Mr. Henry Cottrell, the Consequence of which was the recalling the latter from his Appointment. The several Arguments urged against his Conduct by the Council of Revenue at Moorshedabad, as well as his Letter in Vindication of himself, appear fully in the above Proceedings; and we must

beg leave to refer you to them, that you may form such a Judgement of this Affair as your Candor and Justice may point out. We are, with great Respect, Hon'ble Sirs, Your most faithful humble Servants,

(Signed) WARREN HASTINGS.[1]
R. BARKER.
W. ALDERSEY.
THOMAS LANE.
RICHD. BARWELL.
JAMES HARRIS.
H. GOODWIN.

FORT-WILLIAM, *the 3d November* 1772.

[1] The chief portions of this letter are from Warren Hastings' own pen.

APPENDIX B.

THE GREAT FAMINE OF 1770, DESCRIBED BY EYE-WITNESSES.

SECTION I.—*Selections from General Letters from Bengal (the more important in full).*

25th September 1769.—Paras. 20 to 27. Devastations of the enemy and want of rain for many months had rendered grain so exceedingly scarce at Madras, that that Government had become apprehensive of the most distressing consequences. Measures were taken to supply their wants from Bengal, but scarcity had prevailed also in Bengal. The Lord Holland was lost on her way down to Madras with a cargo of rice, and a second supply would be forwarded.

30th September 1769.—Para. 53. Revenues of the provinces of Bengal and Behar were expected to fall short, owing to the very unusual scarcity of grain.

23d November 1769.—Paras. 8 to 10.—8. 'It is with great concern, Gentlemen, that we are to inform you that we have a most melancholy prospect before our eyes of universal distress for want of grain.[1] Owing to an uncommon drought that has prevailed over every part of the country, insomuch that the oldest inhabitants never remembered to have known anything like it, and as to threaten a famine.

9. 'As there is the greatest probability that this distress will encrease, and a certainty that it cannot be alleviated for six months to come, we have ordered a stock of grain sufficient to serve our army for that period, to be laid up in proper storehouses; and we have taken and shall pursue every means in our power to relieve the miserable situation the poor inhabitants must be involved in from this dreadful calamity; but we cannot

[1] This letter is not signed by the Governor, Mr. Verelst.

flatter ourselves that all our endeavours will prevent very fatal effects being felt, or that human means can check its baneful influence.'

Para. 10 anticipates a falling off of the revenue, and a probable necessity for an abatement; but excepting this (which was most imperfectly carried out), no specific relief measures are specified, nor were any undertaken till long after.

25th January 1770.—Paras. 48 to 50.—48. 'We are sorry to acquaint you that the apprehensions which we expressed to you in our letter of the 23d November last regarding the consequence of the uncommon drought that hath prevailed are confirmed, and this general calamity is severely felt in all the provinces. The Collector-General hath laid before us a representation on this occasion from the Raja and Resident of Burdwaun, proposing a remission to be made in the rents this year; and so sensible are we of the melancholy truth of what they set forth, that we have been induced to grant a remission to the farmers of the Burdwaun province of about 2½ or 3 laacks of rupees, taking care that they also extend it to the ryuts; and at the time of granting it, bring both the farmers and ryuts *under engagements that the same shall be replaced, at certain periods, along with their rents of next year*'—[In reality, less than a single lac, or only £8218, was remitted, and even this had to be paid up at the commencement of the next year (*vide post.* pp. 403 and 406)]; 'and we have desired the Collector-General to adopt this system in the Calcutta lands, which equally require the same indulgence.

49. 'By this method we hope to relieve the farmers and the ryuts, who in this time of dearth and distress claim all the indulgence and assistance that we can afford; and we also hope that, by this method, you will only suffer a temporary inconvenience, not a total loss, and that if the next should be a plentiful year these remissions will be recovered.'

4th February 1770.—Para. 5. 'In Bengal we have not yet found any failure in the revenue or stated payments; but we must not flatter ourselves, in a country where the labourer depends merely on the coming in of the harvest, not on any established or accumulate property, that he can always pay the full demands of Government; neither can we, with any regard to justice or consequences, insist on it.'

9th May 1770—*Secret.*—Para. 3. 'If the internal prosperity

of these provinces corresponded with our external security, we should be happy; but it is far otherwise. Not a drop of rain has fallen in most of the districts for six months. The famine which has ensued, the mortality, the beggary, exceed all description. Above one-third of the inhabitants have perished in the once plentiful province of Purneah, and in other parts the misery is equal. The Supravisor of Behar has represented to our Resident, that the harvest, which in that province is gathered during the months of March and April, has yielded but a scanty return; that the price of grain has risen even since the harvest; and that it is absolutely necessary to remove the brigade from Bankypore beyond the Curamnapa, to save the lives of many poor people who might be subsisted from what the brigade consumed. Though it was the last necessity that induced the Supravisor of Behar to make this proposal, yet your orders against it are so strong, the season so fatal to Europeans on a march, the policy of keeping our troops as near as possible to the Presidency so obvious, and the consequences of being involved in the same difficulties with the king from which we have been but lately freed so much to be dreaded, that however advisable it appears in other respects, we could not with propriety adopt that method of relief We have, however, consented to remove two battalions and the cavalry from the cantonments to the Fort of Buxar, there to encamp, which will be attended with some alleviation to the distresses of Patna,[1] and with no disagreeable consequences to your political interest. On the contrary, since the king and vizier have resumed an intimate correspondence and intercourse with us, we have thought it no unfavourable occasion to bind them faster to us, by interpreting this motion of your troops into a zeal for their honour and support against all aggressors.'

28th June 1770.—Para. 2. 'Few alterations have happened during this short interval. The famine of which we have already given you an unexaggerated description has continued to rage with all its fatal consequences; and notwithstanding all our efforts to administer relief by public contribution to the poor, remission of the collections, and importations from the neighbouring provinces, we have beheld the calamity daily increasing. Your revenues must suffer from it both now and in future; but no

[1] But in the same degree an aggravation of the distress at Buxar, in the very centre of the most cruelly stricken districts.

endeavours shall be omitted on our parts to render this evil as light and as temporary as possible.'

31*st August* 1770.—Para. 14. 'If the accounts transmitted in our letter of the 9th May last of the general calamity which famine had extended to almost every part of these provinces were truly alarming, how much more so must they now be, when we inform you that our miseries have been daily increasing to the present period; nor do we view relief but as a distant prospect. It naturally follows that, from so calamitous an event, great failures in the collection of the revenue must be the inevitable consequence; but still we are willing to hope they will not be so great as our apprehensions have conceived.'

11*th September* 1770.—Para. 4. 'In the several letters from this committee, we have endeavoured to give a very faithful, candid, and impartial account of the distress this country has suffered from the severity of a famine; indeed, it is scarcely possible that any description could be an exaggeration of the misery the inhabitants of it have encountered with. It is not then to be wondered that this calamity has had its influence on the collections; but we are happy to remark they have fell less short than we supposed they would when a famine was only apprehended, and when we could form no idea to what a pitch of misery the country would be reduced.

5. 'From the annual accounts received within these few days from our Resident at the Durbar, we find that the neat sum collected is sicca rupees one crore thirty-eight laack (*sic*) two thousand six hundred and ninety-three nine annoes and ten pie (Sa. Rs. 1,38,02,693:9:10);' (but an additional sum of Rs. 2,03,337 was also wrung out of the people, making a total of Rs. 1,40,06,030;) 'that sicca rupees eight laack three thousand three hundred and twenty-one, fifteen annoes (Sa. Rs. 8,03,321:15) have been obliged to be totally remitted in the different provinces, to alleviate the distress of the wretched inhabitants' (*i.e.* a paltry deduction of 5 per cent. from the revenue in a province that had lost 35 per cent. of its population); 'and that a balance of sicca rupees six laak fourteen thousand two hundred and nineteen, eight annas (Sa. Rs. 6,14,219:8), remains to be collected of last year's agreement; that at the new Purneah, which commenced on the 10th April 1770, a new statement was made of one crore, fifty-two laak, forty-five thousand nine hundred seventy-nine rupees, fifteen

annoes twelve pies (1,52,45,979 : 15 : 2) for Bengal' (being an increase of 10 per cent. during the year of famine !), 'which our Resident, from the authority of Mahomed Reza Cawn, gives us some faint hopes of realising, should the season prove favourable, notwithstanding the loss the country has sustained in the number of inhabitants.'

24th December 1770.—Para. 22. 'The famine having entirely ceased, and there being such an earnest of a plentiful crop that there is already great quantity of grain in this place, and a prospect of much abundance in a short time, we have recommended it to the Board to lay in a quantity of provisions in the new Fort, to answer any emergencies, and this we hope will be done at a very cheap rate.'

12th February 1771.—Paras. 43 and 44.—43. 'In our letter of the 25th January 1770, by the Grafton, we informed you that, on account of the famine which prevailed throughout the country, we had made a remission to the farmers in the Burdwaun province of about 2½ or 3 lacks of rupees, on condition that they should discharge it at certain periods, with the rents of the next year.

44. 'But the Collector-General has represented to us that the great increase of the famine since that period has been the cause of such a mortality and desertion amongst the ryotts, as to deprive the farmers of a possibility of receiving the rents that had been allowed to run in arrear; and that therefore, if some reduction of the sum remitted was not made, many of the farmers would be ruined. On a scrutiny made by Mr. Stuart, it appeared that the farmers had lost by the death or desertions of the ryots, 82,180 rupees of the above 3 lacks. As it was not expected, when this temporary remission was allowed, that the famine would have been so fatal, and as it appeared but equitable that the farmers should be relieved of the payment of sums which they could not collect from the ryotts, we authorised the Collector-General to allow the farmers the sum above specified, should it be found on a further scrutiny that it could not with justice be reduced.' (In reality, the remission was reduced to nothing, for the whole was paid up. *Vide post.* p. 406.)

12th February 1771.—Para. 2. 'Notwithstanding the great severity of the late famine, and the great reduction of people

thereby, some increase has been made in the settlements both of the Bengal and Bahar provinces for the present year; and we hope, as the country recovers itself in succeeding years, a much larger increase may be made without oppressing the ryotts. From the progress already made in the collections, and from the attention and vigilance of the Councils of Revenue, and the supravisors in the different districts, we hope the amount of revenue fixed for the present year will be in great measure realised; though in some particular parts, where the loss of inhabitants has been greatest, and in others where the succeeding crop has been destroyed by the overflowing of the river, we are apprehensive deficiencies will be unavoidable.'

12th April 1771.—P.S. to 2d April. 'We must likewise inform you that great progress has been made on the fortifications since our engineer's last report, considering the immense difficulty we have found in procuring a sufficient number of coolies, owing to the mortality which has in general fallen on the lower ranks of people in Bengal.'

10th January 1772.—Paras. 15–19.—15. 'We are sorry to find ourselves under the necessity of apologizing for a very considerable mistake committed in the information we gave you as to the state of balances of last year, under direction of the Council of Revenue at Moorshedabad. It proceeded from inserting the amount of balances at the end of March for the balance of the year. We now beg leave to correct so considerable an error, and it is with pleasure we inform you that the neat balance of last year's settlement of that department amounts only to rupees eighteen lacks, thirty-eight thousand six hundred and sixty-one, four annas, two gundas, and three cowries.' (The balance was subsequently reduced to twelve lacs, *or less than the increase which had been made to the revenue during the famine year*.)

16. 'We have likewise the pleasure to observe that the collections in each department of revenue are as successfully carried on for the present year as we could have wished; and from the favourableness of the season, we have no doubt that they will be nearer completed to the amount of their different settlements than in any of the preceding years.

17. 'The statement of the Bahar collections for the Bengal year 1178, or 1770–71, we have received since our last advices;

and we find, to our great satisfaction, that they have amounted to Rs. 43,61,651 : 0 : 6, exclusive of extra collections arising from the balances of former years' Tegarry, profit on interest and batta, etc., which amount to Rs. 2,65,044 : 10 : 0; the total of the collections making the sum of Rs. 46,26,695 : 10 : 0.'

18. From which it appears that the amount (collected during the year of famine) has exceeded the receipts in the preceding year by Rs. 4,25,747 : 9 : 3, not including the above sum received on account of extra collections.

SECTION II.—*Representations from Native Correspondence regarding the Famine of* 1770.

Maharajah Shitab Roy.—Received 4th January 1770.—'Such is the scarcity of grain in this province, that fifty poor wretches in a day perish with famine in the streets of Patna.' The calamity is more severely felt in the districts. The 40,000 maunds of rice ordered from Dacca has not arrived for the troops at Bankipore. Urges that expedition be used in forwarding supplies for the troops, that they may not consume the produce of the province, which is not enough for the inhabitants.

From Rujuf Khan, Foujdar.—Received April 13, 1770.—Has 'collected what the country produced,' though the Khureef harvest was almost ruined by the drought; but 'the Rubbee (*i.e.* spring harvest) proving more favourable,' he 'completed the assignments.'

From Mahomed Reza Cawn.—Received 15th May 1770.—'To this hour I have laboured, as well in the collections as in every other branch, with the diligence and attention of the most faithful well-wisher; and as far as the fallible nature of mankind would admit, I have been guilty of no omission. But as there is no remedy against the decrees of Providence, how shall I describe the misery of the country from the excessive droughts, the dearness and scarcity of grain hitherto, but now a total failure? The tanks and springs are dried up, and water grows daily more difficult to be procured. Added to these calamities, frequent and dreadful fires have happened throughout the country, impoverished whole families, and destroyed thousands of lives. The small stores of grain which yet remained at Raje Gunge, Dewan Gunge, and other places within the districts of

Dinagepore and Poorneah, have been consumed by fire. Before, each day furnished accounts of the fate of thousands; but notwithstanding, some hopes were still left that during the months of April and May we should be blessed with rain, and the poor ryotts able to till their ground; but to this hour not a drop has fallen. The coarse crop which is gathered at this season is entirely spoilt, and the seed for the August crop is sown during the months of April and May. It is now the middle of the latter month, and they have not begun for want of rain. Even now, by the help of a few showers, something might be done. If the scarcity of grain and want of rain had been confined to one spot of the province, management and attention might find a remedy; but when the evil is total, there can be no remedy but in the mercy of God. I know not what the divine will has ordained shall befal this country. The calamity is past the ingenuity of man. The Almighty alone can deliver us from such distress.'

From Mahomed Reza Cawn.—Received 2d June 1770.—Notwithstanding the droughts which have prevailed, he has, by exerting his utmost abilities, collected the revenue of 1770, 'as closely as so dreadful a season would admit.' 'The remainder,' he adds, 'cannot be collected without evident ruin to the ryotts, desolation to the country, and a heavy loss in the ensuing year.' (Nevertheless, we have seen that almost the whole was eventually collected.)

Rajah Tejchund of Burdwaun, in a letter dated 14th May 1771, states that, notwithstanding 'the hardships and distresses that have befallen the ryots, the poor, and the inhabitants of this country from the famine,' 'the revenues have been collected without balance.'

SECTION III.—*Abstracts of the Consultations of the Government of Bengal.*

Consultation of the 23d October 1769.—Owing to the scarcity, a stock of grain is to be laid in for the army. The amount required will be 120,000 maunds in six months. This must be provided from countries where there were the most plentiful crops, and which have suffered least from the drought.

The Chief and Consul of Patna to provide 80,000 maunds, of which mds. 60,000 to be sent to the city for Burrampore and

Patna, and mds. 20,000 for the troops at the Presidency. (N.B. Patna, from which this supply was drawn, was one of the most cruelly stricken districts.)

Resident at the Durbar to procure mds. 40,000 from Dinagepore and Poorneah, carefully attending to the wants of the districts whence they draw the supplies. (N.B. Poorneah, whence this supply was drawn, lost 'above one-third' of its inhabitants during the next six months.)

Storehouses to be built at the city and Patna. Cautions as to fire and other accidents.

Residents at the Durbar, and supravisors of the Behar collections, to prevent monopolies of grain. Cultivation of pulse, grain, barley, and grains of the dry season to be encouraged, and every means to be taken which can be thought of to supply the want of rice.

A committee of the Collector-General, the Buxey, and Zemindar, to lay down regulations for the prevention of monopoly and the relief of the inhabitants.

Consultation of the 14th November 1769.—The Dacca chief and council request Rs. 60,000. Sanctioned, and the deputation of Mr. Sumner into Barkergunj to buy grain approved.

Consultation of the 14th November 1769.—Arrangements were made to obtain labour in the fort in construction at Calcutta, by supplying the workmen with grain at cheap rates. Difficulties were said to be thrown in the way by the dealers.

19,000 maunds were in store (or less than a single brigade's consumption during three months). Further supplies were expected from different parts of the country. It was proposed to supply a seer of rice a-day a-head to persons labouring on the fortifications, *at cost price and charges*, the difference in their favour to be paid them in cowries: thus they would get it 40 per cent. cheaper than in the Bazaar. The scarcity is likely to continue for eight months, increasing in intensity. Mds. 49,000 might be required for 8000 coolies: so much besides that in store had been ordered, and more supplies can be drawn from Chittagong.

The Buxey to have always mds. 20,000 in store for the use of the garrison. Fort St. George may be in condition now to supply rice. Fort Marlborough cannot be supplied from Bengal. Chittagong must be pressed for further supplies. Fort St. George was written to (but in fact it was Bengal that had sent supplies

to Madras, not Madras to Bengal, until the close of the famine).

Consultation of the 20th November 1769.—Representation of the Raja of Burdwaun. Drought and dearness of grain. Crop parched, and cut up for fodder for the cattle. Tanks dry. Water insufficient for the inhabitants. Rubbee harvest backward, and without rain will be destroyed. Ryuts deserting in large bodies.

Resident at the Durbar states that relief has been obtained from the prohibition of monopoly; but there is an alarming prospect of the province becoming desolate in the ensuing season, from flight of the ryuts and want of cultivation. This communication has been deferred for fear of causing alarm; but duty and humanity require that the distresses of the country be brought to notice. *South*, they were blessed with rain; but northward the rice crop has been in *some places totally lost*, and the greatest part of it *in others*. Rivers dry, and tanks drained. The ryuts cannot cultivate cotton, mulberry, grain, pease, barley, tobacco, or beht root. Hence the flight of ryuts to become day labourers where they can earn a subsistence. Unless a remedy can be found, this must result in loss of revenue.

Consultation of the 6th December 1769.—The collections are equal to those of former years, notwithstanding the drought; but this cannot be expected to continue. The Resident expects to send down 2000 coolies. 500 have been engaged for six months, but at high rates of wages.

Consultation of the 12th December 1769.—Chief and council of Chittagong promise every effort to relieve the scarcity.

Consultation of the 18th January 1770.—Fort St. George promises to supply Fort Marlboro with grain, if not obtained direct from the Malabar coast. They have promise of a plentiful crop from the late rains.

Consultation of the 13th February 1770.—Resident at the Durbar proposes to distribute rice at six places at the rate of half a seer a-day for each person. Europeans and their gomashtas are forestalling. They should be prohibited purchasing till after next August in the provinces which supply the city. The eastern districts will supply Calcutta. Orders are issued for 40,000 maunds of rice for the troops at Berhampore.

Consultation of the 26th February 1770.—Matters are left to

the Resident's 'prudence and impartiality,' sanctioning remissions repayable in preference to abatement of revenue and tuccavee.

Consultation of the 27th March 1770.—The proposed supplies of rice not arrived from Backergunge.

Consultation of the 3d April 1770.—The Buxey reports mds. 33,913 have arrived from Backergunge. Mds. 25,657 of the August crop (indifferent in quality) have been ordered to be sold, but in small parcels.

Consultation of the 3d April 1770.—At the instance of Messrs. Russell, Floyer, and Hare (3d April 1770), fifty maunds of rice per day, in addition to the merchants' assistance, have been ordered to be distributed in charity in Calcutta, and twenty to twenty-five maunds a-day in Burdwaun.

Consultation of the 14th August 1770.—The Council refuse any assistance to the French colony at Chandernagore, on the ground that they have not sufficient for a day's consumption in stock.

Consultation of the 19th September 1770.—Deficiency of the Maldah investment. in consequence of the severe drought which has prevailed there, which has swept away many of the inhabitants, and so enfeebled those that remain, that there is not half the quantity of cloths prepared this year as the last.

Consultation of the 22d October 1770.—Difficulty with the French at Lushypore, in consequence of an endeavour to smuggle out a small quantity of rice.

Consultation of the 14th November 1770.—'The famine having now entirely ceased, and there being not only a great abundance, but also a prospect of a most plentiful harvest,—

'Agreed—That the embargo on rice be taken off, and that a publication be issued to that purpose.'

SECTION IV.—*Abstracts of Extracts from the Proceedings of the Provincial Council of Moorshedabad.*

Consultation of the 27th September 1770.—The Nawab should be supported vigorously in his collections from the Bhadoon (September) harvest, that there may be no loss, as might be apprehended in the present impoverished state of the country.

Consultation of the 4th October 1770.—Letter from Mr. Grose, Supravisor of Behar, dated Govindgunge, 26th September 1770: —Notwithstanding rain had fallen, the greatest part of the land is uncultivated, in consequence of ryuts absconding and leaving only

a dissatisfied portion of the population. Paddy flourishes, and the harvest would have been plentiful if cultivation had proceeded.

Letter from the Supravisor of Rungpore, dated 26th September:—The distresses of the poor continue very great. A number of miserable objects daily apply for relief. Five rupees' worth of rice are daily distributed amongst the most needy. Ten rupees' worth had been previously distributed. The Provincial Council sanctions this expenditure. [Ten shillings a-day among 400,000 starving beings!]

Consultation of the 17th October 1770.—Mr. Ducarel, Supravisor of Poorneah, in a letter dated 10th October 1771, complains of Sepoys being sent by Colonel Champion to purchase grain for the troops at Monghyr, although exportation from his district is prohibited. At the present time of distress and failure of the August crops, he hopes that the supplies for Monghyr may be obtained in the ordinary way through the ordinary native merchants, not by armed troops.

Consultation of the 23d October 1770.—Mr. Higginson, Supravisor of Beerbhoom, in a letter dated 18th October 1770, reports that the lands managed by Shickdars are heavily in balance. They are represented to be 'in such a barren and depopulated state, from the bad effects of the famine,' as to preclude the hope of finding farmers; nevertheless, he expects an increase in the collections, and to make a considerable one next year.

Consultation of the 6th November 1770.—In the late famine, Calcutta was well supplied with grain at a time when the places where it was brought from were almost destitute. The rate of wages—six or eight annas a-month for a labourer (*i.e.* besides a certain allowance of food)—'is calculated for a time when rice is at two or three maunds for a rupee.' 'If they cannot procure their subsistence at an adequate price, they and their families either go off to other countries, where they have higher wages or provisions cheaper;' and 'if the exportation of grain is now made general,' gomashtas and merchants will 'buy it up at a price at which the working people cannot purchase it even for their subsistence.'—*Letter from the Supravisor of Poorneah.*

Consultation of the 26th November 1770.—The Naib Diwan complains of difficulties in providing the silk investment. From the calamities of the season and extraordinary famine, many of

the ryuts are dead for want of subsistence, many houses are depopulated, and the remaining inhabitants are utterly incapable of industry or exerting themselves to cultivate. Mr. Harwood, Supravisor of Raj Mahal, when sending the abstract Bundobust for the current year, alludes to the 'impoverished, ruined, and miserable state' of the districts under his management.

Consultation of the 28th November 1770.—Rajah Kusum Chund of Nuddeah reports the 'death and desertion of many of the ryots' owing to the famine.

Consultation of the 13th December 1770.—Mr. Ducarel, Supravisor of Poorneah, reporting on the present settlement for three years at an increase, says: 'Had I known of the famine, and mortality of the inhabitants which followed, I never would have made a Bundobust (*i.e.* arrangement) for three years, or with an increase.' Of four of the Purgunnahs, after personal visitation, he says, that 'there having been little or no harvest, the people either perished or went elsewhere for subsistence; and they (*i.e.* the lands) were really sunk in one year almost half their value; on which point I should not have been satisfied if I had not received every proof that the closest examination could give me. They are now really lying waste for want of inhabitants, particularly Huvelee Poorneah, which contained more than 1000 villages; and it is the deficiency which takes place here that renders the Poorneah revenue less this year than heretofore.'

Further on, Mr. Ducarel adds as follows:—

'The Gunge, called Alumgunge, the principal receipts of which depended on the consumption of grain in the town, has declined greatly by reason of the considerable decrease of inhabitants during the last famine, a great part of the town having become a jungle, and literally a refuge for wild beasts.

'In respect to the improvement of the country, I must, in answer, premise that, according to the attested accounts I have received from the Pergunnahs, there have perished near two lacks (*i.e.* 200,000) of people in this district. Except the effects of this loss (be it more or less), I can safely give it as my opinion that the country is improving.'

Consultation of the 20th December 1770.—Letter from Mr. Reed of Moorshedabad states that in Dacca, Poorneah, and Hooghly, collections are regularly kept up, and some of them paid in advance! The rest of the supravisors give reason to

expect that the revenue of the province in general will be duly collected, 'excepting in some few places.'

Consultation of the 14th December 1770.—The rice from Barkergunge, Mr. Becher observed, arrived at a most critical time; and 'the Company has reaped a considerable benefit by a measure which proved a *general relief to the immediate dependants on the English here*, and tended to preserve order and regularity;' otherwise, 'the greatest confusion must have ensued.'

Distribution of rice amongst the miserable objects in and near the city was sanctioned by the committee to the amount of Rs. 87,000; Rs. 40,000 paid by the Company, and Rs. 47,000 by the Nawab. The charge was exceeded. 'The famine and its dreadful consequences increased considerably as the season advanced; rice rose from ten to three seers per rupee; and neither humanity nor policy would admit of a stop being put to the distribution earlier than it was done. It is for consideration whether the Nawab and ministers shall be called on for their proportion of the excess.' 'These gentlemen, independent of this distribution, helped to preserve the lives of many by their charitable donations, as I believe did every man of property in these parts; indeed, a man must have had a heart of stone that had the ability and would have refused his mite for the relief of such miserable objects as constantly presented themselves to our view.' 'The charge was indispensable, and the Company will benefit by the preservation of the numbers who have survived owing to the distribution of the rice.'

Consultation of the 31st December 1770.—Mr. Rous, Supravisor of Rajshie, reports: 'I cannot give,' he adds, 'a more striking proof of the deficiency of the August harvest, than by mentioning a circumstance probably never before known, that the consumption of grain in these parts is now supplied by importation from the northern districts and the precincts of Moorshedabad; and that at Nahore, situate in the heart of a rice country, grain sells at 18 seers per rupee, whilst at Moorshedabad it is above 30 seers of the same species of weight.'

Consultation of the 4th February 1771.—The Rajah Bynath of Dinagepore implores some remission on account of the depopulation and ruined state of his district which has ensued from famine; represents that many villages are wholly deserted, and a great part of the land fallen waste for want of seed and imple-

ments of cultivation. Out of a total demand of Rs. 13,70,932, as much as Rs. 12,00,000 had been collected; and the Board now orders that if the rajah does not 'heartily co-operate in answering' their expectations of the revenue in full, he will be deprived of his territory, and summoned before them as a defaulter.

Consultation of the 28th February 1771.—The Supravisor of Beerbhoom, Mr. Higginson, reports: 'I have now to represent to you, gentlemen, the bad consequences that will attend my enforcing the collections of last year's balances from the remaining poor ryotts of these districts who have so considerably suffered from the late famine, that by far the greatest part of them are rendered utterly incapable of paying them. By obliging them to sell their cattle and utensils for agriculture, a small proportion might be recovered; but this would certainly be the means of their deserting the province, and preventing the cultivation for next year, which would be much more fatal to the revenue of the country than the whole loss of the balances. In Bissenpore, the sum of Rs. 1067 was collected on this account before I received charge of the province, and those ryuts from whom it was received have fled the country. The cause of many of these balances for last year have arisen in a great measure from the corrupt management of aumils and black collectors (through whom we then administered the country), and in Bissenpore it was particularly as follows:—It was the custom for the ryuts to give paddy for the rents of the ground they cultivated; but last year, their crop being entirely spoilt for want of the usual rains, they had no paddy to pay. The collector, taking advantage of this, forced them to settle their accounts with him at the rate of three rupees each measure, whereas the price of any former years was only one rupee each measure. This the ryuts not being able to comply with, many of them deserted the province, and those that remained were entirely ruined. And I now refer it to you, gentlemen, to know in what manner I am to recover these balances, though in the meantime I shall endeavour to collect all I can from those who are able to pay, but I fear they will be very few.'

Mr. Higginson had visited the eastern Pergunnahs, those chiefly afflicted.

'These,' he says, 'are all situated on the easternmost side of this province, which suffer much more considerably than any other part, on account of there being so little rain there last year

in comparison with the rest of the Pergunnahs. Truly concerned am I to acquaint you that the bad effects of the last famine appear in these places beyond description dreadful. Many hundreds of villages are entirely depopulated; and even in the large towns there are not a fourth part of the houses inhabited. For want of ryuts to cultivate the ground, there are immense tracts of a fine open country which remain wholly waste and unimproved. The ryuts in general of these Pergunnahs have entreated me to relieve them from the oppression of sigdars, and to let out their lands to farmers in the same manner as in the other parts of the province, when they promise to set heartily to work on the cultivation, and to remain in their present habitations. The advantage of beginning this as early in the season as possible, must appear obvious to you, as by far the greatest number of the ryuts are not able to cultivate their lands without the assistance of Tuccavee, which can only be given to farmers who, for their own interests, will advance the money to encourage their ryuts.'

The Council replied:

'Though we can by no means recede from the demands for Moofussil balances due from your districts, yet we cannot but agree with you in the propriety of suspending them for the present, as continuing to harass the ryuts for them at the present season would be attended with prejudice to the ensuing year's cultivation and collections. Should the approaching year, however, prove a prosperous one, we flatter ourselves an adjustment might be made for the recovery of these balances; and it is an object that we must recommend to your attention in that event.'

Consultation of the 1st April 1771.—The Supravisor of Nuddea begs an advance of £4000 to enable the cultivators to recommence tillage. The council sanction only £2500, and make the revenue-farmers responsible for its repayment.

Consultation of the 15th April 1771.—Mr. Rous, Supravisor of Rajshie, reports: 'I receive advices from the Pergunnahs of the frequent firing of villages by people whose distress drives them to such acts of despair and villany. Numbers of ryuts, who have hitherto borne the first of characters amongst their neighbours, pursue this last desperate resource to procure themselves a subsistence.

SECTION V.—*Selections from the Select Committee, the Secret Consultations, and Committee of Revenue.*

Consultation of the 9th February 1769.—Mr. Becher, resident of the Durbar, reports that the 'revenues were never so closely collected before.'

Consultation of the 16th August 1769.—Mr. Rumbold, chief of Bahar, after several letters announcing drought and foreboding scarcity, now reports that plentiful showers have fallen, and is hopeful that want and hunger may yet be relieved.

Consultations from this date to end of year refer to many letters from the local officers complaining of want of rain, apprehending great distress and a falling off of the revenues, and suggesting remissions of the land-tax, and permission to pay the Government demands wholly or partly in grain.

Consultation of the 28th January 1770.—Mr. Alexander, Supravisor of Bahar, has reported that it is not to 'distant evil,' but to 'the extremity of immediate distress,' that a remedy must be applied; that 'each day lost in deliberation adds to the calamity;' that he has issued an order to take twenty-five seers of rice out of every forty for the Government, leaving fifteen for the ryut,—sugar-cane, cotton, and opium to pay, according to custom.

Mr. Alexander further proposed to make a circuit of the province with Raja Shitab Roy. He says: 'To judge from the city of Patna, the interior of the country must be in a deplorable condition. From fifty to sixty people have died of absolute hunger on the streets every day for these ten days past.' Above 8000 beggars were still in the place; and if the rajah were to attempt to relieve them in a public manner, the number would still increase from every village about Patna. For those near his own habitation he serves out fifty rupees' worth of rice every day at the Company's expense, and will continue to do so till they are relieved, or he receives orders to the contrary. The rajah proposed to allot about two lakhs of rupees for the relief and assistance of the poor, but Mr. Alexander could not sanction this without permission.

The council recommend caution in the receipt of the revenue in kind, and Mr. Alexander was instructed to adopt the plan only to a limited extent.

Consultation of the 28th April 1770.—The depopulation in the

interior part of the country is more rapid than will be imagined by any person who has not been witness to it; and such is the disposition of the people, that they seem rather inclined to submit to death than extricate themselves from misery and hunger by industry and labour. I wished to give every possible encouragement to cultivation, and with this view Perwannahs were issued out, and public notice everywhere given that no rent should be collected on the lands producing a particular kind of grain called Arzun for the space of six months. This I understand to be a very coarse seed, and never yields any considerable revenue; in plentiful seasons it is usually at the price of five maunds for a rupee.

The miseries of the poor at this place increase in such a manner, that no less than 150 have died in a day in Patna. In consequence of this, and the latitude you have given me, I disburse on the Company's account daily 380 sonat rupees,—100 of which is disbursed by the rajah, 80 by Messrs. Stephenson, Droz, and Law, and 150 by myself. I am confident the whole is laid out with the utmost economy. The officers at Dinapore, by a private subscription, feed a large number, and the French and Dutch give as largely as can be expected from their small factories.

Consultation of the 28th April 1770.—'The districts that have more particularly suffered from the unfavourableness of the season are Poorneah, Rajmahl, Beerbhoom, and a part of Rajeshahye; indeed, the only districts under this department from which complaints have not come of the want of rain are Dacca, and those low countries that are situate to the eastward, where the rivers have overflown and fertilized the lands even this remarkable dry season.'

Bhangulpore had particularly suffered from drought, which, added to other causes, has reduced this fine country to a miserable state. Lenient revenue arrangements are suggested.

The condition of Beerbhoom and its inhabitants is alluded to as 'miserable, almost exceeding description.' The continuance of the drought is deplored; and the condition of the country is thus summed up by Mr. Becher:—

'If it should please God to continue the present drought much longer, all endeavour on your part (the Select Committee), on that of the Ministers, and on mine, must be vain. Rain which

fell in February enabled the ryots to plough the ground, and they now require a further quantity in order to turn the earth and sow their crops. If they obtain this blessing soon, there will be a fair prospect for their next crops; if not, this will be a most miserable country. Indeed, the Company can expect but small revenues next year. The distress of the inhabitants at present does not only proceed from scarcity of provisions and want of rain to cultivate their lands, but in many parts they are without water to drink.'

Consultation of the 28th April 1770.—Foujdar of Poorneah, Mahomed Ala Khan.

'Hardly a day passes without thirty or forty people dying.' 'Multitudes already have, and continue to perish of hunger.' Seed grain has been sold for food, and cattle and agricultural utensils. Children offered for sale, and no buyers. Mahomed Ali expresses an official, but not very creditable, 'blindness to distress' and 'deafness to lamentation,' in the interests of the Sircar, *i.e.* the Government. The Aumil of Bishenpore, Nobkishwar, testifies that—

'From excessive drought, and failure of the supply from lakes and tanks, the fields of rice, parched by the heat of the sun, are become like fields of dried straw.'

The Aumil of Jessore, Ujagger Mull, reports no rain up to nor through Bhadoor. The people are bringing in the leaves of trees from the jungles for food; and they offer to sell their sons and daughters. Many of the ryots are running away.

The Foujdar of Rajmahal, Pertab Roy, makes a similar statement. Ploughs and oxen are offered for revenue, and clamours interrupt the business of the Cutcherry.

Mr. Ducarel reports that the miseries of the town of Poorneah are not less shocking than those of the rural parts. Pestilence must be guarded against by the removal of the dead bodies. Upwards of 1000 were buried in three days after his arrival. One half the cultivators and payers of revenue will perish with hunger, whilst those able to purchase a subsistence will pay at least 500 per cent. advance in the price of food. He considers that, on the high and sandy soils, more than half the ryots are dead.

Mr. Harwood, Rajmahal, reports that the zameendars are ruined, the lands not having yielded half produce for the last twelve months.

In a subsequent letter, Mr. Harwood (28th March 1770), alluding to the humanity of sanctioning abatements, which had been recently allowed, says:

'Had the misery of the inhabitants been reported to you sooner, and had the ryots received this ease at the proper time, your beneficent intentions would have been fully answered, and many thousands who are now reduced to poverty might have enjoyed ease, if not affluence. But, from motives of false policy and self-interest, the (native) collectors in the different parts, during this calamitous season, have pressed so very hard upon the ryots to oblige them to make good their engagements to Government, that their total ruin has invariably followed.' Mr. Harwood was hopeful, as grain grows 'neither more scarce nor dear,' that 'the calamity was almost at an end.'

Consultation of the 3d May 1770.—*Mr. Alexander* reports from Patna that the famine increases, and leads to apprehensions of most fatal consequences. The *consumption of the army presses on the inhabitants.*

'Your neighbours,' the committee conclude in reply, 'enjoying the blessing of almost a plentiful season, whilst you are suffering the evils of death and famine, exhibits but an unpleasant contrast, and rather wounds the credit of English policy. We have no doubt of your vigilance and capacity; but the Government of this country has provided so very imperfectly for the security of the poor, that, unless very extraordinary efforts are made to prevent it, these calamities never fail to occasion the grossest abuses.'

Consultation of the 9th June 1770.—The Resident at the Durbar reports: 'The scene of misery that intervened, and still continues, shocks humanity too much to bear description. Certain it is, that in several parts the living have fed on the dead, and the number that has perished in those provinces that have most suffered is calculated to have been, within these few months, as six is to sixteen of the whole inhabitants.'

Consultation of the 21st June 1770.—The Resident at the Durbar reports that the misery and distress increase daily. Rice sells at 6 and 7 seers per rupee; and there have been several days lately when not a grain was to be purchased. Many even of the Company's immediate dependents must have been starved but for the supplies from Bakergunge. Plenty of rain now, but

it is feared too much. This apprehension and reduced cultivation, owing to the want of people, cattle, and even seed, does not afford a very fair prospect for the ensuing collections.

Consultation of the 19th July 1770.—The Resident at the Durbar reports: 'Previous representations' are 'faint in comparison to the miseries now endured. Within 30 miles round the city, rice sells at only 3 seers for a rupee; other grain in proportion; and even at those exorbitant prices there is not nearly sufficient for the daily supply of half the inhabitants, so that in the city of Moorshedabad alone it is calculated that more than five hundred are starved daily, and in the villages and country adjacent the numbers said to perish exceed belief.' 'Every endeavour of the (native) Ministers and myself has been exerted to lessen this dreadful calamity. The prospect of the approaching crop is favourable, and we have the comfort to know that the distress of the inhabitants to the northward and eastward of us is greatly relieved from what they have before suffered. In one month we may expect relief from our present distresses from the new harvest, if people survive to gather it in; but the numbers that I am sensible must perish in that interval, and those that I see dying around me, greatly affect my feelings and humanity as a man, and make me, as a servant of the Company, apprehensive of the consequences that may ensue to the revenues.'

Secret Consultations of the 1st February 1771—*Note by the Committee.*—'The sale of Bakergunge rice produced a profit of Rs. 67,593, which, deducted from Rs. 124,606, the advances from the Moorshedabad Treasury, leaves Rs. 59,611 expended by the Company, or Rs. 16,911 only beyond the original subscription. The Nawab's first subscription exceeded that of the Company. He and his Ministers have acted liberally. They should not be called on for more.'

Mr. Becher, resident at the Durbar, reports (24th Dec. 1770):—'This rice came at a most critical time, and I have the satisfaction to find that the Company has reaped considerable benefit (*i.e.* a profit of nearly £7000) by a measure which provided general relief *to the immediate dependents on the English here*, and tended to preserve order and regularity in the military corps at a time of such scarcity and distress, that I am convinced, had it not been for the supplies of rice I was enabled to issue from the store, the greatest confusion must have ensued. I must now, gentlemen,

mention the circumstance of the distribution of rice among the many miserable objects that presented themselves during the late dreadful calamity in and near the city of Moorshedabad. On a representation made by me, the committee gave their consent that a distribution should take place to the amount of 87,000 rupees, and that the company should be at the charge of Rs. 40,000; the rest was to be defrayed by the Nabob and Ministers, to which they assented.'

He goes on to bear witness to the charitable efforts of the native aristocracy, and states that the price of rice rose to 4d. per pound during the later months of the famine.

SECTION VI.—*Opinions of the Court of Directors on the action of the Bengal Council during the Famine.*

Letter, dated the 28th August 1771.—After commending in general terms those individuals who have done anything to relieve the distress, the Court expresses its indignation against those ('but especially natives of England') who have turned the public distress into a source of private profit.

Para. 10. 'We are led to these reflections by perusing the letters from Mr. Becher and Mahomed Reza Khan, which accuse *the gomashtas of English gentlemen*' (*i.e.* English servants of the Company), 'not barely for monopolizing grain, but for compelling the poor ryots to sell even the seed requisite for the next harvest. It was natural for us to expect, upon reading the above advices, that the strictest inquiry into the names and stations of all persons capable of such transactions would have been the immediate consequence, and that the most exemplary punishment had been inflicted upon all offenders who could dare to counteract the benevolence of the Company, and entertain a thought of profiting by the universal distress of the miserable natives, whose dying cries, it is said, were too affecting to admit of an adequate description.

11. 'You will judge from hence how great must have been our surprise on observing that, upon a general charge of this nature having been made, and not one name specified either by Mr. Becher or Mahomed Reza Khan, you never entered into any inquiry at all about the matter! And what seems equally strange and absurd, you in general terms tell the Resident at the Durbar he may depend on your concurrence *in every measure that may*

tend to relieve the distress of the poor in this time of dearth, and yet reject the only particular remedy pointed out and recommended by him for that purpose! . . . As part of the charge sets forth that the ryots were *compelled* to sell their rice to these monopolizing Europeans, we have reason to suspect that they could be no other than persons of some rank in our service; otherwise, we apprehend they would not have presumed on having influence sufficient to prevent an inquiry into their proceedings.'[1]

[1] I am indebted to the kindness of the Secretary of State for India for the extracts whence the foregoing selections are derived, my own abstracts being too condensed for publication. I have not attempted to change the official spelling.

APPENDIX C.

THE COOK'S CHRONICLE OF BEERBHOOM, CIRC. 1785–1820.

Being the Story of Ram Ghulam Bawarchi, aged 80.

[The term 'Saheb,' which occurs so frequently, is a title of respect appended by the natives to the names of English gentlemen.]

'The first English lord of Beerbhoom was Keating Saheb; my father was cook to him, and I have seen him. My mother held me up in her arms to look at him when he passed with his Sepoys and elephants. This was in the time of the Rajahs of Beerbhoom. Their name was great; they had horses, elephants, and armies, with whom they used to hunt and to war. They had a palace in Rajnagar, and a garden where were their tombs, now gone to jungle. Also many forts among the western hills, and a summer-house at Hoseinabad; but the walls of all these have sunk into the earth, and now their summer palace can be known only by the little green mounds of earth behind the collector's house. I have heard my father say that Lord Keating Saheb was a very great Saheb; but I was a child, and know not. My father was a very old man, and used to tell me that when he was newly married the Sahebs came into the country, and soon the price of rice rose to three seers for the rupee (*i.e.* during the famine of 1770); so that all the people died, and the country became jungle. He also used to tell me that the Mahrattas (Bargi log) came from the west, burning many towns, and killing the people. They seized my father, and tied his hands, and fastened him on a horse, and took him away to their camp as a slave. But my father's sister prayed the chiefs, and they let my father go. Hesilrige Saheb and Pye Saheb were before Keating Saheb; but

Pye Saheb lived far off, and Hesilrige Saheb came and cut the jungle, and the ryots sowed rice again.

'The first Saheb, I remember distinctly, was Judge Brook Saheb. His house was near where the judge's house now stands. My uncle was cook in Brook Saheb's house; and my earliest remembrance is Mem Saheb Brook walking up and down the verandah weeping because her little daughter was dead. I do not remember what she died of; but I remember my uncle carried me in his arms to see the Saheb and the Mem Saheb put the little girl in the ground. There were other Sahebs there too; but the Doctor Saheb had gone to Soorool to attend Cheap Saheb's children. The little girl was carried to a tamarind tree at the foot of the garden, and put into the earth there; then they put a white stone over her, and the stone is there to this day.

'I also knew Cheap Saheb. My father went to be his cook when Keating Saheb left. Cheap Saheb was the Company's merchant (Commercial Resident). He had a great house on the top of a hill, with a wall all round, higher than the ramparts round the fort in Calcutta. Within the wall were gardens and orchards bearing many fruits; also many houses and stores. The Company's cloth was kept there; and the Gomashtahs and Keranies lived in a village within the wall. There were also Sepoys to guard the Company's storehouses; and the inferior servants of the Company lived in a town at the bottom of the hill. Cheap Saheb was a rich and powerful Saheb; he had many children, mostly daughters, each of whom had servants of their own. There were six table-servants to wait on Cheap Saheb and the Mem Saheb. He had about sixty house-servants in all, with many horses, and an aviary full of strange birds. Deer used to run about in the pleasure-grounds. The Mem Saheb used to be very fond of flowers. He was a great Saheb; and I learned my trade in his kitchen.

'Afterwards there was a gentleman at Elambazaar, on the river, Erskine Saheb, who died not many years ago. He also was a great Saheb, and was in partnership with Cheap Saheb. They traded in many things—in cloths, sugar, silk, lac—and made much money. When I had learned my work in Cheap Saheb's kitchen, I was sent to Elambazaar to act for Erskine Saheb's cook, who was ill; but the kitchen at Elambazaar was not so big as the kitchen at Cheap Saheb's.

'When I was away at Soorool and Elambazaar, there were many Sahebs came and went in Soorie. I was not in their kitchen, and did not know them. I remember the names of Kemble Saheb, Tikri Saheb, Chalblan Saheb, Reily Saheb, Morrison Saheb, who was here twelve years, Biscoe Saheb. I did not know these gentlemen. (Some of these names are so perverted, that I can make nothing of them.)

'The price of all things was cheap. For a pice and a half (a halfpenny), a great feast (barakhana) was given. (This is figurative, but what follows is the truth.) Fat fowls were thirty-two to the rupee (*i.e.* for two shillings), young chickens at forty or fifty, ducks from sixteen to twenty-five, lambs three annas (4½d.) a piece, a fat sheep six annas (9d.), rice from sixty to one hundred pounds for a rupee. All things cost little. Servants' wages were higher. My father got Rs. 20 as head cook; khidmatgars (table-servants) got Rs. 8; coolies (labourers) got four to seven pice a-day (1½d. to 2¾d.), but they could buy more food with their money, and lived better. The Santal people did not then come down to the plains in search of work, and the Bowries and Haris (labouring classes) got plenty of work. The Santal people were then cutting the jungle at the foot of the hills on the west of the district; now they work all over the district. Poor men had no rupees: they always bought and sold with cowries. A coolie got four to six pan (320 to 480) cowries for his day's work (worth from 1½d. to 3d.). There were very few inhabitants. Most of the cultivators had farms of their own, but there were also a few *krishans* who worked for them. The farmer gave the land, the seed, the plough, and the oxen, and got two-thirds of the crops; the *krishan* only gave his labour, and got one-third of the crop. This was the way they tilled the jungle lands. When the Santal and hill-men came down from the hills for work, then the *krishans* increased. Now they are all over the district, and the *krishans* have to give the plough and the oxen in many parts, and get but barely one-third of the crop. Their lot is becoming hard. All the cultivating classes used to be able to get land; now they cannot get land even as *krishans*, and have to work as hired labourers.

'The courts and public offices, when I was a boy, were in the Red House village, near where the Padri Saheb (the missionary) now lives. There were then only a very few Sahebs in

the station. They were the collector, the judge, the assistant, and the doctor. I do not remember any more. I was married when seven years of age, but my wife was taken by her parents to Gwari (Krishnagar), and I did not see her again till I was twenty years old. I was about twenty when I got my first regular place. It was with Clark Saheb, the assistant collector. He lived in the Anindapur House, in the Lines (cantonments); it has now fallen to ruins. There was then only a little road in the station joining one house to another. I went with Clark Saheb to Gwari when he was transferred there. Clark Saheb went before in a palki; I and the other servants came with the luggage behind. We had a guard. The baggage was carried partly on bullock carts, but mostly on men's backs, as the roads were hardly to be passed. We went by Lampur and Kirinahar to Cutwa, then we put the baggage into boats, and so reached Krishnagar. It took us sixteen days, I remember. There was no government road in that direction then, but the Zemindars cleared a pathway, each through his own estates. The *chowkidars* (village watchmen) all along the road were turned out to protect the assistant collector's baggage as we went along.'

(I took down the foregoing in Hindustnani from the old man's lips at several sittings, but at this point he had a severe illness, and I had left the district before he was strong enough to come to me again. It is useless to look for perfect accuracy in such narratives, but it forms a fair specimen of the chronicles I have obtained from other aged inhabitants.)

W. W. H.

APPENDIX D.

THE PANDIT'S CHRONICLE OF BEERBHOOM,

Drawn up for me in Bengali, from local traditions, Sanscrit works, and the archives of native families, by Nabin Chandra Bandopadya.

Introduction.

I give this and the corresponding Chronicle of Bishenpore without attempting historical corrections. They are fair specimens of a learned native's idea of local history, and, like all similar works, contain here and there valuable hints as to the condition of the people, and the rights of the various orders of society, before the country passed under our care.

To the student of ethnology, the class of manuscripts of which Appendix D. and F. are specimens, establish four important points: First, that before the Aryans reached Bengal, communities of herdsmen and agriculturists were living in the land under their own princes; second, that the Aryans obtained a footing in Bengal, not always as conquerors, but in various capacities; third, that after Aryan kingdoms had been founded throughout Bengal, many aboriginal princes retained their territories side by side with the new comers, and sometimes supplied them with aboriginal troops; fourth, that the Aryan colonization of Bengal was a gradual natural process, accomplished by successive waves of emigrants from the north, and that a long enough time elapsed for the aborigines to influence Aryan dialects and Aryan religion, before they were finally enslaved or driven back from the lowlands.

The Pandit's Chronicle.

According to the geographical accounts of the Purana, the limit of the Pundra country coincided with that of the south of

Bengal, and comprised modern Bengal, Beerbhoom, Jungle-Mahal, Burdwan, Raj-Mahal, some parts of Moorshedabad, Dinajpur, Midnapur, Nuddea, and Nabadwipa. From the name of the country, the ancients called its inhabitants Pundaris.

Ballal Sen, king of Gour, divided the descendants of the five Brahmans, brought into the country by Adishwara, into two sects—the Varindra and the Rari—both of which held the title of Kulin. The Rari inhabited Burdwan, Beerbhoom, Bancorah, and a few other towns, in which Bhuba Nand Sen established a separate monarchy. It was during the reign of the Sen family, or that of the Pals, that the original princes of Bishenpore founded an empire in the mountainous regions. Much is told of the separate kingdoms set up by the successors of Adishwara. Each prince ruled his district with vigour; and although he did not oppress his vassal nobility, he maintained complete sway over them.

A tradition relates the origin of the name Beerbhoom. It is stated that once upon a time the Raja of Bishenpore went out to exercise his trained hawks in the mountainous districts of his empire. He threw off one of his birds to the pursuit of a heron, then usually hunted with hawks. The heron turned upon its pursuer with great fury, and came off victorious. This unusual occurrence excited the surprise of the king. He imagined that it must have been owing to some mysterious quality in the soil; that the soil was in fact Vir-mati (*i.e.* vigorous soil), and that whatever might be brought forth by that soil would be endowed with heroic energy and power. Thereupon he named it Virbhumi, a name by which that mountainous region was ever afterwards known. Others, however, derive the name from the inhabitants themselves; for in old times this country produced many heroes, and so it acquired the name of Vir-bhumi (Beerbhoom), or Land of Heroes.[1] The present capital of the district is Suri, a corruption of Surjya, a Bengali term for 'glory.'

Beerbhoom is bounded on the north by Monghir and Raj-Mahal, on the south by Burdwan and Pachete (Bancorah), on the east by Raj-Shye, and on the west by Monghyr and Pachete At the time of the Muhammadan rule, the country was named by Abul Fazl '*Madaran*.' In old times the country was ill

[1] It is right to state that Vir or Bir, in Santali, the aboriginal language of Beerbhoom, means 'jungle.'—W. W. H.

supplied with water, and this, together with the fact that a large part of it was occupied by jungles, rendered it in great measure unfit for agriculture.

When Beerbhoom was in the possession of the Mussulmans, it was frequently invaded by the hilly tribe 'Jhar Bhundi.' To put an end to these plundering excursions, Shere Shah made over Soory to Adoola the son of Boduroolah. In 1540, Shere Shah, with 500,000 Afghans, defeated Hoomaon at Canouj, and mounted the throne of Delhi. In the following year he came to Gour, and divided it into several districts, over each of which he placed a distinct ruler. These governors had a superior who adjusted disputes, and acted as the viceroy of Shere Shah.

To the east of Soory is a village, Akchokra, where the Pandus are said to have taken refuge after their escape from Jatigriha. In this place one of the five brothers, by name Bim, killed a monster named Hirombok (probably a legend of the Aryan conquest of Bengal), and married his sister Hiromba, by whom he had a son called Ghuttutcuch, who played a conspicuous part in the battle of Kurukshetra, as mentioned in the Mahahharat. By some accounts it is said that Akchocra includes Nimai, Ghoredaha, Gonootia, and Cottershore, and that Bhim resided there with his wife and mother. There is a place in Beerbhoom called Deoghur, where Ram, on his way to Ceylon, left the god Siva. Another Siva named Bakeshwar was placed in a village which afterwards received the name of that god, and to which many worshippers still resort in the month of April of each year to do honour to the deity. During the reign of the Baidya family, the kings of Bishenpore and Burdwan alone had a place in history. Of the kings of Beerbhoom—Lowshan, Ichay Gose, Shungai, Gidhore (some of these seem to have been aboriginal princes), Mollar Singh, and Beersingh—we know little more than the names.

The hills of Beerbhoom were inhabited by savage tribes, and only in the outskirts of the country did the minor kings make their residence. Two brothers, Bir-Singh and Chaitanya Singh, came to Beerbhoom from the north-west provinces, subdued the mountaineers, and selected places as their capitals, which still bear their names—Birsinghpur and Chaitangapur and Chaitanga. Fattih Singh, who is said to have been the brother of Bir Sing, subdued many places in Moorshedahad, which now bear the

name of Fattipore Purgunah, and are included in the district of Beerbhoom.

Bir-Singh was the first (Hindu) king of Beerbhoom. He possessed a strong and athletic frame, and by his might subdued the inhabitants of the jungles, and thus extended the boundary of his kingdom. He deprived his brother of his territories, and built the capital of Birsinghpore. Many kings and zemindars owned his power, and acknowledged him as their lord paramount. The ruins of palaces, forts, and tanks are still to be seen in Birsinghpore, six miles west of Soory. The king lost his life in battle with the Mussulmans; and his queen, from fear of being maltreated by the enemy, drowned herself in a pond, which is still named the Ranidoha (Queen's Tank). Bir-Singh dedicated a temple to the honour of the goddess Kali, and set up a stone idol. The rajah also placed an idol named Gopal in the neighbourhood of Birsinghpore; and the place, being surrounded by a jungle, received the name of Brindaban.

The Bhils, Cols, Gondas, and other hill-tribes (aborigines), lived in the Maghadha kingdom (Bahar and Bengal), and Beerbhoom was also included in it. This kingdom embraced a large extent of country, but does not appear to have been well governed, as even among the zemindars, who lived within a short distance of the capital, there were some who did not pay tribute (in other words, the Aryan conquest was partial). One rajah was exempt from tribute, owing to the fact that he was a good sportsman. After the fall of the Magadha dynasty, the Pals assumed the supreme power; their original seat was Bahar. The Baidya house succeeded the Pals.

The Santals of Beerbhoom inhabit the hills of Dumka, Jal-Jhari, and Kumarabad. Their god was Boram (Marang-Buru), to whom they offered human sacrifices. When a pestilence ravaged their country, however, they abandoned the practice, and, instead, offered goats, hogs, or other animals. The Boalia, another hill-tribe, worshipped the same deity. Some of them lived in Burdwan during the time of Rajah Kritti Chander, and were employed by him as porters. They still follow that occupation in Burdwan and Calcutta. The jungles to the north-west of Beerbhoom are inhabited by a savage tribe called Birpore, who earn a livelihood by the sale of ropes made from the bark of the chinody tree. They feed upon the flesh of monkeys,

dogs, and hogs, and consider elephants worthy of their homage and worship. These savage hordes, together with the wild beasts of the jungle, were a continual source of alarm to the lowlanders. But as the country furnished those heroes whom the (Hindu) kings were accustomed to employ in their service, its inhabitants (the wild tribes) were not exterminated.

It is affirmed by some that the predecessors of Ali Naki Khan gained possession of Raj-Nagar by murdering Bir Rajah; but before recounting the events of his reign, it will be necessary to inquire as to the time when Raj-Nagar was established. It appears that the kingdom of Nagar was founded during the reign of the Baidya family, and not that of the Mussulmans; for it is to be observed, that when the Mussulmans obtained the throne of Bengal, the Subadar (viceroy) constructed a road from Debkoti, east of Gour, to Nagar, the chief town of Beerbhoom, for the purposes of traffic. This was in the year 1205.

Bir Rajah was descended from a noble Brahman family. He made Nagar his capital, and enjoyed an unrivalled reputation for his valour and skill in arms. All the kings of the surrounding districts owned him as their paramount. When the Patans were in the height of their power, and were laying waste many fair provinces in Bengal, Bir Rajah stood forth to oppose, and, by his military tact and distinguished courage, succeeded in freeing the country from the oppressor.

Two Patans named Assad-Ulla-Khan and Joned Khan, of the Patan race, from the north-west, one day presented themselves before the Rajah of Nagar. Their stature and manly bearing attracted his attention, and impressed him with such an idea of their prowess, that he resolved to take them into his service; and after their valour had been sufficiently put to the test, he raised them to the rank of commanders and confidential ministers. Under their administration the country made great and rapid advances, and the people enjoyed the blessings of peace. In course of time, however, the Patans became jealous of the power of their master, and watched every opportunity to work his destruction. One of them, Assad-Ulla, became enamoured of the beauty of the queen, and instigated her to favour their base designs. It is said that the king was fond of wrestling, and that he had a special building set apart for that purpose, where he engaged daily in the sport. On one occasion, when

Assad-Ulla presented himself there, the rajah ordered his servants to refuse him admittance. This roused the anger of Assad-Ulla. He returned with his brother Joned, forced an entrance into the hall, and fell upon the king. A serious conflict now ensued; and it is difficult to say how it would have ended, had not Joned Khan, at the instigation of the queen, with whom he also was in love, attacked them both, and threw them struggling into a well. Although the servants and retainers of the king stood by, they were prevented from interfering by the presence of the queen; so that both the rajah and Assad-Ulla were drowned. The people mourned the death of their king, under whom they had so long enjoyed happiness and prosperity.[1]

Joned Khan.—The queen now assumed the royal power, and raised Joned Khan to the rank of Diwan. The administration of affairs was placed entirely in the hands of the Patan. Ere long the queen died, leaving a son as legal heir to the throne. After her death the soldiers rose in mutiny, but were speedily brought back to duty by the Patan. Joned died soon after, leaving the government in the hands of Bahadur Khan.

Before proceeding with his reign, a few facts may be stated regarding the earlier history of these Patans. Their father died while the children were still young, leaving his widow totally unprovided with the means of existence. One day, while she had gone to beg some rice of her neighbours, a fakir made his appearance at her dwelling, and, apparently without any cause, beat one of the boys severely with his shoes. The screams of the child soon brought the mother to his aid; and on her demanding an explanation from the fakir, he consoled her by saying that he had not been beating, but blessing her son, and that the time was not far distant when both brothers should sway the sceptre of Bengal. The youths, when arrived at manhood, set out on a journey to distant lands, and used every opportunity of making themselves expert in the use of arms. In the course of their travels they came to Beerbhoom; and we have already recounted their deeds in that country, and how they became kings.

Bahadur Khan, or Ran-Mast Khan (A.D. 1600–1659).[2]—This prince commenced his reign in the month of Joit 1007, Bengali

[1] The learned pandit has here spoiled a very striking legend. Elsewhere I hope to tell it in its proper form.

[2] B. D. A.

era. Under his rule the country had rest and peace, the population was considerably increased, and agriculture met with a full share of attention. He died in the Bengali year 1066 (A.D. 1689), leaving the throne to his only son, Khwaja Kamal Khan. Nothing is recorded of the latter except that he beautified the capital, and effected several other improvements throughout his kingdom. He died in the Bengali year 1104 (A.D. 1697), and was succeeded by his son Asd Ulla, one of the wisest and most pious kings of his time. Asd Ulla added to the number of the troops, and caused numerous tanks to be dug in the capital, by which means the miseries resulting from the scarcity of water were in great measure avoided. He contrived to free his kingdom from the necessity of paying tribute to the Nawab, to whom he rendered valuable assistance in time of war. Many mosques were dedicated to the honour of God, and much of his time was passed in religious services. He left two sons, Badya Jama and Azmat Khan.

Badya Jama.[1]—This prince ascended the throne in the year 1125 (A.D. 1718),[2] and obtained a sannad from Murshad Kuli, the Nawab of Moorshedabad. It was about this time that a new arrangement was made regarding the tribute paid to the Nawab, 346,000 rupees being the amount agreed upon. During this reign, the Marhattahs, under Bhaskar Pandit, plundered the western countries, and eventually encamped in a place called Kendua Danga, or Ganj Murshad. But when the rainy season set in they retired to Catwah, accompanied by Mir Habib, a Patan. Badya Jama, with his brother Ali Naki, and the Rajah of Burdwan, assisted the Nawab in dispersing the Marhattahs, and driving them to Midnapore. Badya had two wives. By the first he had two sons, Ahmad Jama Khan and Mahammad Ali Khan; and by the second, one named Asd Jama Khan. Besides these three, he had an illegitimate son named Bahadur Jama Khan. Ahmad was of a religious turn of mind, and interfered in no way with the administration of the country. The second and third sons were powerful princes, and gained a high reputation for their courage and skill in arms. On a certain occasion, a fakir named Sai Ful Hak, from the north, made his appearance at the Beerbhoom court, and in course of time was admitted into the confidence of the king. The fakir possessed a good know-

[1] The Pandit uses *J* for *Z*, there being no *Z* in Bengali. [2] B. D. A.

ledge of the Kuran, and the king spent much of his time in hearing him read from the book. In process of time he became to much engrossed with his religious instructor, that the affairs of his kingdom were totally neglected; and his sons, Ali and Ahmad, set themselves to get rid of the favourite. With this view they made their way to Moorshedabad. While they remained here, an occurrence took place which brought them under the notice of the Nawab. One day an elephant of the emperor was led to a pond to drink, near to which Ahmad happened to be standing. As the animal drew up, the driver called to the prince to move out of its way; but Ahmad, instead of heeding the order, caught hold of the elephant by the tusks, and threw it to a considerable distance. This feat amazed those that stood by, and ere long reached the ears of the Nawab, who immediately summoned the brothers into his presence. On being asked the reason of their sudden appearance in Moorshedabad, the Patans informed him of the story of the fakir, and the disorder likely to occur in their father's kingdom. The Nawab gave them permission to murder the fakir; and accordingly the brothers, hastening back to Raj-Nagar, put the fakir to death. Their father mourned his loss, and slowly pining, died of a broken heart. His sons, too, felt ashamed of their crime, and promised to their father neither to interfere in any political matter, nor to entertain any hopes of ever succeeding to the throne. They accordingly resolved to support their step-brother Asd as the rightful heir. With this intent they departed for Moorshedabad, and informed the Nawab of the affair. The Nawab at first expressed reluctance, saying that it was illegal to raise the youngest to the throne while his brothers lived; but, on their earnest entreaties, he gave his consent, and the coronation of Asd Jama was performed with great pomp on their return home. The two brothers afterwards set out for Moorshedabad, and remained in the service of the Nawab. They distinguished themselves in a war with the Marhattahs; and on one occasion, when Mir Jafir Ali Khan's son-in-law had been carried off a prisoner, and confined in an iron cage, they entered the camp of the Marhattahs in disguise, and having overheard their plans, attacked them unawares, and returned in triumph with the captive.

Suraja Doula ascended the throne of his grandfather as Viceroy of Bengal, and ere long found himself called upon to take

up arms against the English. Two reasons are alleged: 1. That the English had given refuge to Kishna Doss, the enemy of the Nawab; and 2. That, without any permission from the Nawab, they had established forts in the countries under his control. Accordingly the Nawab collected a powerful host, the command of which he gave to Ali Naki Khan and Ahmad Jama Khan of Beerbhoom, along with Diwan Manik Chand, Bahur Mohan Lall, and Jafer Ali Khan. These marched against the English towards Calcutta, and encamped at Bagh-bazar. The English fled to Howra, Bally, and the fort. The Nawab attacked the fort, and carried it by storm. He placed the English prisoners under the charge of Diwan Manik Chand, and was going to return in triumph to Moorshedabad. Diwan treated the captives with cruelty, and shut them up, one hundred and forty-six in all, in the Black Hole, whence only thirteen came out alive. This was in the year 1756.

After this victory Ali Naki Khan of Beerbhoom took possession of part of the enemy's country, and laid the foundation of Alipore, which is now the seat of government (the residence of the Lieutenant-Governors of Bengal). Of all the petty princes under the Nawab, this man, together with his brother, were the most powerful, and rendered the most effectual assistance to their lord. On one occasion Suraja Doula wished Ali to inform him which lady in Beerbhoom he considered to be the most beautiful.[1] The Patan, enraged, replied that he accounted those beautiful who bore any resemblance to his mother and her daughters. So saying, he raised his sword and struck at the Nawab; but the blow missed the mark, and coming down upon a stone pillar, split it in two. The attendants were so much taken by surprise, that they made no effort to protect their royal master. Probably, also, the known daring of the Patan was sufficient to restrain any interference on their part. The brothers were, however, obliged to withdraw themselves from court for some time; but afterwards, having made their peace with the Nawab, they were permitted to return, and were again received into the favour and confidence of their prince.

After the defeat of Badya Jama Khan of Beerbhoom by the Rajah Gidhor, Ali Naki Khan led his army against his father's

[1] An insult, implying that Ali would name some one of his own family, whom the Nawab would then seize as a concubine.

enemy, and after a severe struggle, which lasted for six days, succeeded in driving his opponents from the field. The town of Deoghar came into the possession of the Patan after the subjection of the hill-tribes. It was, and still is, the seat of the Hindu god Baidya-Nath (Bij-Nath). The devotees brought to its shrine many valuable presents of the value of about 50,000 rupees every month. Ali Naki Khan left the god in the hands of the men of the place, called Pandahs, from whom he exacted tribute. The Patan married a sister of his father, by whom he had a son who died while still a youth (?). His death preyed upon the minds both of his father and his uncle, Ahmad Jama Khan, the latter of whom at length put an end to his life on the 15th Magh 1169 (1762 A.D.). The father gradually sank under these heavy losses, and passed the last two years of his life in extreme misery. He died on 21st Falgoon 1171, and was buried in front of his brother's tomb. The two brothers were possessed of noble qualities. They were gentle, brave, generous, and averse to sensual gratifications. Badya Jama Khan spent the greater part of his life in the performance of religious duties, and at length died in 1178 (A.D. 1771), having suffered much in his declining years from the death of his son. He was buried in a garden to the west of Nagar. His surviving son Asd Jama Khan was already on the throne. Immediately upon his accession, with the consent of his father and brothers, he adorned the capital, and placed in it many rich merchants who added greatly to its commercial importance. Mir Jafir Ali Khan placed the reins of government in the hands of his son, who, soon after his accession, began to tyrannize over his subjects. He killed two daughters of the Nawab; but while engaged in plundering their treasures, he was struck by lightning, and carried off along with his accomplices. Asd Jama, the Rajah of Beerbhoom, thinking this a good opportunity for taking up arms against the Nawab, marched with a powerful army to Chuna Khalli. The Zamindars, vassals of the Nawab, failed to make any resistance, and their lord was so much affected by the death of his son, that he could not put himself at their head. Accordingly, to prevent the advance of the Rajah of Beerbhoom, he sued for peace, and requested Asd Jama to be content with the districts he had already taken possession of. This, however, did not satisfy the Rajah, who proceeded across

the Ganges. Upon this the wife of the Nawab, Mari Bigam, sought the aid of the English, promising them a large tract of her husband's dominions in return. They consented, and immediately gave battle to the Rajah, defeated his immense host, and pursued him to the fort of Nagar. The siege of this fortress lasted several days, but at length the Rajah lost his bravest general, Afzal Khan. A treaty was afterwards concluded between the parties, the conditions of which were: 1. That the English should have one-third share of the Rajah's rental. 2. That they should not interfere in the affairs of Beerbhoom. 3. That on all occasions of importance, the Rajah should consult with the English. After this, Asd Jama regularly paid tribute to the Nawab. He also gave 1000 biggahs (360 acres) of land rent free to Moonshee Anup Mithra, in return for sums of money lent to the Rajah. He bestowed 6500 biggahs (2200 acres) of land as Jagir for educating his son.

Fourteen miles from Soory there is a village called Mallarpore. Mallar Sing was its proprietor, a religious and popular man. He was imposed upon by a person who told him that the Rajah of Nagar intended to make him adopt the religion of Muhammad. He took this so much to heart, that without inquiry as to the truth he put himself to death. The Rajah was grieved on hearing of his death, and endeavoured to discover the perpetrator of the trick, but without success.

Twenty miles from Soory, and north of Nagar, there is a vast forest called Sinpahari. The governor of the district was Ichai Ghose, who built there a large temple named Ichai Mandir, and a fort called Sham Rup Ghar. He was attacked and overpowered by another man in the district called Lai Sen; and his temple, with its goddess and fort, fell into the hands of his enemy.

Kindu Billogram, a village eighteen miles distant from Soory, was the residence of a famous poet named Jaya deva Muni, and of a god, Radha Damuda. The poet is said to have walked forty miles every day to bathe in the Ganges. The village is considered to be a sacred place by the Hindus, who assemble annually, to the number of 50,000 or 60,000, to offer worship at the shrine. A fair called Magher Sankranti takes place on the last day of Magh every year.

Asd Jama Khan of Beerbhoom died of paralysis at Calcutta in 1184 (A.D. 1777). He was a liberal and powerful prince, and

was held in high esteem by his subjects. He had a great desire to reign over the whole of Bengal, and for this purpose made many attempts at the supreme power, but in vain. His reign extended over a period of twenty-six years. After his death his brother Bahadur Jama Khan besought the assistance of the English Government to raise him to the throne. At the same time the widow of Asd Jama Khan, called Lall Bihi, together with her brother Mahammed Taki Khan, set up a rival claim, and contended that, as Bahadur was the illegitimate son of Badya Jama Khan, the father of her husband, he could have no legal right to be prince. The English decided in her favour, and accordingly Lall Bihi was raised to the throne. Soon after this, however, Bhoton Saha, an intimate friend of Bahadur, devised a plan which deprived the widow of her power. He instructed the porter of Mahammed Taki to kill Bahadur's doorkeeper, and to report that he had been commissioned by his master to cause the death of Bahadur himself. By bribing the servant, Bhoton managed to get his evil design carried into effect; and the English, believing the report, took the power from the hands of Mahammed and conferred it upon Bahadur. The widow was kindly treated by the new king, and received a certain amount for her support. Bahadur died in 1196 (A.D. 1789), and was buried in the garden at Nagar. He left his son Mahammed Jama Khan as heir to the throne.

Radha Krishna Rai was one of the Dewans of the kings of Nagar. He resided in Purandarpur—so named from the god Purandar, found under the earth—and obtained 1400 bgs. (500 acres) of land from the rajahs as Jagir.

Mahammed Jama Khan succeeded to the throne, with the consent of the English, in 1197 (A.D. 1790). During his minority the affairs of state were entrusted to Dewan Lalla Ram Nath and Mr. Keating. When arrived at manhood, he assumed the reins of government, and ruled with wisdom and firmness. In person he was tall and powerful; and after his death, his painting was sent to Calcutta. The population of Beerbhoom during his reign was 700,000, of which one-third were Hindus (in reality two-thirds). It was Lalla Ram Nath who effected the permanent arrangement for the revenues of Beerbhoom. He built the temple of Bhandissar Siva in a place called Bhandiban, six miles from Soory. A large tract of land was allowed him as Jagir.

Mahammed Diwan Jama Khan, the son of Mahammed Jama Khan, ascended the throne in 1209 (A.D. 1802), and received the sanad from the hands of the English in 1219 (A.D. 1812). He died in 1262 (A.D. 1855), leaving his son Johur Jama Khan, who still lives. When Beerbhoom came entirely into the possession of the English, the jail was of mud, thatched with straw; but on May 15th, 1800, a brick one was erected, by order of the Government, under the superintendence of Mr. Campbell. Great encouragement was likewise given to agriculture, and the people made rapid advances in the arts of civilisation.

The Rajahs of Beerbhoom built many mosques and forts, and dug tanks. The most of these are now in ruin.

In the year 1261 (A.D. 1854-55) the Santals of Beerbhoom rose in insurrection against the English; but with the assistance of the Rajah of Burdwan and the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division, Mr. Elliot, they were speedily quelled. By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Mahammed Hamid, a Darogar, Golum Alli Khan, Mir Khan, Sahib Khan, Sookh Lall, and Himat Alli Jamadar were rewarded on the 20th January 1856.

Beerbhoom is a fertile country. Raj-Nagar was and still is famous for its mangoes and preserved fruits. The country is watered by the rivers Aji, the More, and Bakeshwar. The average amount of land-tax now realized is about 6½ laks of rupees (£65,000).

(I have preserved the Bengali spelling, which is as uncertain and in the case of proper names, particularly Muhammadan ones, as far from the true etymology as our own popular rendering of Indian words. Corrections, whether historical or geographical, have been left for another volume. The true dates will be found in The Family Book of the Princes in Beerbhoom, Appendix F.)

APPENDIX E.

THE PANDIT'S CHRONICLE OF BISHENPORE.

The following is an abbreviation of a Bengali work composed by my Pandit, Nobin Chandra Bandopadya, collated with a Persian MS. drawn up by the Rajah's order (for which I am indebted to Mr. George Loch of the Bengal Civil Service, one of the Judges of Her Majesty's Supreme Court in Bengal), and with other papers furnished from the Rajah's record-room.

THE CHRONICLE.

Raghu Nath Singh, the founder of the dynasty of Bishenpore, derived his origin from the kings of Jai Nagar near Brindaban. The story of his parentage is as follows. The king of Jai Nagar being seized with a desire to visit distant countries, set out for Purusatam, and on his way thither passed through Bishenpore. While resting at one of the halting-places in the great forest of that country, his wife gave birth to a son; and the king foreseeing the difficulties of carrying a child with him, left the mother and her baby behind in the woods, and went forward on his journey. Such barbarous desertions are still heard of: even women, when they have once set their hearts upon pilgrimage, become merciless to their offspring, and abandon any child they may happen to give birth to by the way.

Soon after the father had departed, a man named Sri Kasmetia Bagdi (an aboriginal inhabitant), when gathering firewood, passed by the halting-place, and saw the newly born child lying helpless and alone. The mother never was heard of; and whether she was devoured by wild beasts, or found shelter with the natives, remains a mystery to this day. The woodman took the infant home, and reared him till he reached the age of seven, when a certain Brahman of the place, struck with his beauty and the marks of royal descent that were visible on his person, took him

to his own house. (Observe this is the first appearance of a resident Aryan in the legend; and he is not a conqueror, but a poor colonist.) The Brahman, however, being an indigent person, was compelled to send the boy out to tend his cows and work for his living; and the lad so grew upon the affections of the Bagdis (aborigines), that they called him Raghu Nath, Lord Raghu, and supplied him with food.

One day in particular the boy attracted the notice of everybody by his beauty, as he played with the other young cowherds, while the elder shepherds looked on. The fathers, seeing that the day was wearing on, set their faces homewards, driving their numerous cattle before them. On the way, a cow belonging to Raghu's herd strayed from the rest, and the boy going in search of her into the thick forest, wandered up and down, looking in all directions, but in vain, till at last, overcome with fatigue, he lay down at the foot of a tree. No sooner had he fallen asleep than a huge cobra glided out of a tuft of high grass; but instead of biting the lad, gazed stedfastly on him, and erecting his many-coloured hood above the sleeper's face, shaded him from the rays of the sun (a legend told of many successful adventurers). His adopted parent meanwhile was in great distress about his disappearance, and unable to bear the suspense any longer, started in search of him. At length he came to the spot; but what was his terror when he beheld the deadly snake, with hood erect, as if in the act to strike! 'Alas, my loved one,' he cried, 'what madness tempted me to send thee forth to thy destruction?' Meanwhile the snake, scared by his approach, and quickly contracting his hood, glided off, and the boy, awakened by the withdrawal of the shade, started up. The old man poured forth tears of gratitude, vowing never to let his precious child go forth into the forest again. 'Ah, what would I have done had I lost you?' he exclaimed; 'you whom I cannot bear to be out of my sight for a moment. From the day I brought you to my house with only a few worn rags, and tended by the Bagdis, deep and unspeakable tenderness sprung up in my heart towards you. Your beautiful face, and the tears rolling down your little cheeks, will never be forgotten.' As upon the immeasurable surface of the ocean, no fish by its most rapid career raises a single ripple, so not all the swift events and constant changes of life can disturb the calm of true affection.

One day the boy found a golden ball in a water-course, and brought it to his master, who treasured it up with delight as a sign of the future greatness of his child. Soon afterwards, the king (an aboriginal prince) having died, his obsequies were celebrated with great pomp, and people from all parts went to the funeral feast. The Brahman, being very poor, went among the rest, taking Raghu with him. When the Brahman was in the middle of his repast, the late king's elephant seized Raghu with his trunk, and approached the empty throne. Great was the consternation and terror lest the elephant should dash the boy to pieces; but when the royal animal carefully placed the lad on the throne, the whole multitude, thunderstruck at seeing a deed so manifestly done by the will of God, filled the place with their acclamations, and the ministers agreed to crown the boy on the spot. So they made him king of the country; and the singers came and poured forth their melodies, the musicians played on their instruments, and the minstrels tuned their harps, and recited the wonderful deed that had been done.

For this was the custom in the old countries, that when the king died, the ministers did not crown the legal heir, but they made the king's white elephant, attended by all the officers of state, and covered with jewelled trappings, go through the capital in solemn procession: and whomsoever among the multitude the elephant lifted on to its back, him they crowned, saying that it was the act of God.

The ancients give other examples of a lad rising to the throne in consequence of having been auspiciously shaded by the hood of a cobra. For instance, a certain Brahman had in his house a poor boy who tended his cattle. One day, as the boy lay asleep in the field, a hermit passing that way noticed that a black snake had raised its hood over the child's face to shelter him from the sun. As the hermit drew near, the snake fled, and the boy, awakening, shared the scanty supply of rice he had brought out with him for his mid-day meal with the holy man. On leaving, the hermit told the boy he would one day be a king, cautioning him, at the same time, not to sleep with his legs crossed, or his face looking right up to the sun, and ordering him to learn the art of war, and to accustom himself to arms. When next the hermit met the boy, he discovered certain marks, which foretell royalty, on the lad's feet; and asked him what he would give to

a hermit by whose advice he should reach the throne. The boy gladly answered that he would give anything the hermit asked. So the hermit told him how to begin with petty depredations on the adjoining chiefs, and by degrees, as he grew stronger, to carry on a more open warfare, until he had reduced all that part of the country. The hermit never took his eye off the youth; and whenever he disobeyed any precept, the holy man punished him with stripes. In process of time the boy came to be king of all the country, and gave the hermit a lac of rupees, with the township and lands of Chandpara at a fixed quit rent, whence that township is styled Chandpara of the Fixed Rent to this day. (Several other instances are here given, which, for the sake of brevity, may be omitted.)

Raghu Nath Singh, therefore, was the first king of Bishenpore (*i.e.* the first king of Aryan birth, the aboriginal princes going for nothing with my worthy Pandit). He is celebrated in history as the king of the Bagdis (aborigines), and was the first of a race that has reigned nearly 1100 years. He founded the city of Bishenpore, guided thither by auspicious signs. For long his kingdom passed under the name of Malabhumi (the land of the wrestlers), then as the jungle mahals (forest country); it is now included in the districts of Burdwan, Bancorah, and Beerbhoom.

Beerbhoom is known as a place for heroes and Bagdis (aboriginal castes). They wore long black hair, and generally decorated themselves with iron ornaments, the most costly being of silver, and called Balla. For arms they had spears and javelins. The kings often employed them as guards of their palaces, owing to their skill in wrestling. They also joined with the wild tribes (*i.e.* aboriginal races of the highlands) in committing acts of plunder, and thus became a terror to the more peaceable inhabitants. The Nawab of Moorshedabad occasionally solicited their assistance in time of war. At the time when the Nawab was engaged in conflict with the Marhattahs, he requested his dependent kings to give him every support in their power. Accordingly the Rajah of Bishenpore despatched a band of his bravest heroes to the assistance of the Nawab. By their valour the Marhattahs were subdued, and from that time the Rajah of Bishenpore was the most renowned of the tributary kings of the Nawab.

The history of the kings of Bishenpore, written by Raja Gopal

Sing, was found in the Bancoorah Collectorate. Guided by the facts contained therein, and collecting others from various sources, I proceed to give a chronicle of the kings of Bishenpore. One or two facts connected with the kings and their country may be given in passing.

The kings belonged to the Kutumi branch of the Maharishi family. Their god was Acolong, and their goddess Pura, of the Ketti caste. The kings were followers of Shambad; the high priest or Rishi was Bissa Mitra; Brahmans who worshipped Vishnu were their religious guides. The sacred verse called Gatha, which the kings received at the time of the sacred thread *Paitta*, is still in use. Bishenpore acquired a place in history from the time of Raja Raghu Nath Sing, whom the Bagdis (aborigines) called Raghu Nath. At the time of his coronation he was termed 'Original Wrestler,' or *Adi Malla*.

1. *Original Wrestler, Adi Malla.*—The Raja was born in 122 Bengali era (A.D. 715).[1] He received a mark in his forehead from other kings, that is, was crowned in the year of Bishenpore 1. He reigned 34 years. His queen Chandra Rumari was the daughter of Indra Sing, a western prince of Solar. He built a temple in honour of the goddess Punta Surri. The capital was Laogram.

2. *Raja Jai Malla.*—This prince was born in 156 Bengali era (A.D. 749), and was crowned in the year of Bishenpore 34. He reigned 30 years, and died in 64 Bishenpore era. His queen was the daughter of Dinu Sing, a prince of the western Solar race. Raja Jai built a temple in honour of Sat Chako Behari. His Kamdar (steward and chancellor) was Bhagi Ratti Gope, who received the rents of the country of the Wrestlers. The king left two sons: the elder succeeded him, while the younger was pensioned. The race of the latter is now extinct. The Raja was a powerful monarch, and fond of pompous display. He increased the number of troops.

3. *Raja Ambhuchalla* (*otherwise Beni Malla*).—The Raja was born in Sangbat, 186 Bengali era (A.D. 779), and his coronation took place in the year of Bishenpore 64. He reigned 12 years, and died in 76. His capital was Laogram. He married Kan-

[1] In matters of chronology I adopt not my Pandit's figures, which are often contradictory, but the family book of the kings of Bishenpore, and other Persian archives of ascertained accuracy, so far as dates are concerned.—Be. D. A.

chan Muni, the daughter of Mattiar Sing, a western king of Solar race. His Kamdar, Bhagi Ratti Sing, held the same office as under the former king. He had five sons, of whom the eldest succeeded him, while the others received pensions. No descendants of theirs now remain.

[Thus the Pandit goes on through a weary list of kings, all of whom married ladies of Aryan birth, Kshatryan princesses from the north, and most of whom employed Aryan settlers as their stewards and ministers. They warred with the adjoining princes —for the most part aborigines, but some of them rival Aryan immigrants—built temples, principally to Aryan divinities, but occasionally to the ghosts of celebrated men, according to the aboriginal ideas of worship; but throughout this and all similar documents that I have examined, the importance of the aboriginal element and the frequency of its mention steadily decline. I give an example here and there, adopting the chronology of the family book, etc., instead of my Pandit's.]

18. *Raja Jaggat Malla.*—The Raja was born in 275 Bishenpore era (A.D. 990), crowned in 318 (A.D. 1033), and died in 336 (A.D. 1051). Bishenpore was his capital. He married Chandrabatti, daughter of Golunda Sing. In the earlier part of his reign he erected a building in honour of Radha Binod Thakur, and another for Rush Mandip. His Kamdar (steward) was Gopal Sing. He left three sons. Bishenpore was the most renowned city in the world, and it became more beautiful than the beautified house of Indra in heaven. The buildings were of pure white stone. Within the walls of the palace were theatres, embellished rooms, dwelling-houses, and dressing-rooms. There were also houses for elephants, barracks for soldiers, stables, storehouses, armouries, a treasury, and a temple. The king secured fame by adding to the magnificence of the city. It was during his reign that a number of merchants established themselves in the city.

33. *Raja Ram Malla (Khetra Nath Malla ?).*—The Raja was crowned in 564 (A.D. 1277), and died in 587 (A.D. 1300), after a reign of 23 years. His consort was Sukumari Bai, daughter of Nand Lall Sing. In his reign a temple was built to the god Radha Kanta Jin (apparently to the ghost of some hero), and cost an enormous sum. The Kamdar (steward) was Jagu Mandhar Goho. The king left four sons. At this time the fort was improved, and various sorts of fire-engines were brought into it. A

governor was appointed, with orders to prepare uniform for the army. The soldiers learned the use of arms more perfectly, and the high renown they bore was sufficient to strike terror even into the hearts of the giant race. In this reign no foreign prince ventured to attack Bishenpore.[1]

48. *Raja Birhambar.*—He was born in 868, and succeeded to the throne in 881 Bishenpore era (A.D. 1596). He reigned 26 years. This king had four wives and twenty-two sons. Three temples were erected in his reign. The fort received its last embellishment, and guns were mounted on the walls. He led his forces against the Nawab of Moorshedabad; but, understanding that he was the Lord Superior of the country, he paid 167,000 rupees (£17,000) as tribute, and returned to his capital. His Kamdar was Durga Prasand Ghor.

54. *Raja Gopal Singh.*—This prince was born in 975 Bishenpore era, and died in 1055 (A.D. 1708), after a reign of 38 years. He was married to the daughter of Raghunath Tungu, whose capital was Tungubhumi. Five temples were erected in his reign. At this time the Marhattahs, under the command of Bhaskar Pandit, appeared before the southern gate of the fort of Bishenpore. The Raja met them with his troops, but victory leaned to the side of his enemies. By the favour of the god Modan Mohan, it is said, the guns were fired without any human assistance. Among the slain was the Marhattah general. The Bishenpore troops plundered the enemy, and retired within the fort. Others relate that the king, by his own prowess, slew many of the opponents; but, failing to take the life of the general, he declined a second battle, and fled into the fort. Upon this the Marhattas renewed the attack, but were effectually repelled by the guns. Maharajah Kritti Chund Bahadur of Burdwan also attacked Bishenpore, and defeated its king, but soon after joined in league with him against the Marhattahs. The king left two sons, of whom the elder succeeded him. Upon the younger was bestowed the Jagir of Jamkundi, which possession his descendants still retain.

[Thus the chronicle goes on. One prince digs tanks and sets

[1] I am unable to identify Ram Malla with the name of any king in the chronological MSS., so I give him the date and reign of the thirty-third king in the family lists, as he has that position in my Pandit's chronicle.—Be. D. A.

up idols, often representing aboriginal worship; another encourages trade; a fourth goes to war. The eldest son, if living, succeeded to the throne, but the others had a right to a suitable provision. The Bishenpore family appears sometimes as the enemy, sometimes as the ally, and sometimes as the tributary, of the Mussulman Nawab, but it was formally exempted from personal attendance at the court of Moorshedabad, and appeared, like the English in later days, by a representative or resident at the Durbar. Of several princes it is recorded that they encouraged trade, and that strangers settled in their capital; one appointed two judges, another improved the fortifications; and the family drop the patronymic of Wrestler (one of the last relics of ancient aboriginal influences), and take that of Sing after the 50th lineal prince (922 Bishenpore era, A.D. 1637). In the 18th century the family rapidly declined; the Marhattas impoverished them; the famine of 1770 left their kingdom empty of inhabitants; and the English, treating these tributary princes as mere land-stewards, added to their public burdens at pleasure, and completed their ruin. 'After the idol Modan Mohan,' a remnant of aboriginal worship, 'was removed from Bishenpore, the city began to fall into decay. Owing to his great indigence, the Raja pawned the idol to Gokal Chandra Mittra of Calcutta. Some time after, the unfortunate prince with great difficulty managed to collect the amount required to redeem it, and sent his minister to Calcutta to bring home the pledge. Gokal received the money, but refused to restore the idol. The case was brought before the Supreme Court at Calcutta, and was decided in favour of the Rajah; and Gokal caused a second idol to be made, exactly resembling the original, and presented it to the Rajah.' Thus ends the Pandit's chronicle.]

APPENDIX F.

THE FAMILY BOOK OF THE PRINCES OF BEERBHOOM.

The following is given not for its intrinsic interest, but as a specimen of the chronological archives of native houses. The original is a Persian MS. obtained from the Rajah's dilapidated palace.

THE FAMILY BOOK.

This is the family book of the Rajahs of Beerbhoom—setting forth the year in which each Rajah ascended the throne, how long he reigned, in what place he dwelt, and of what disease he died.

1st. Diwan Ranmast Khan Bahadur reigned from the beginning of Jeyt 1007 Bengal era (1600 A.D.) to 1st Kartik 1066 Bengal era (A.D. 1659), when he died of fever.

2d. Diwan Kwajah Kamal Khan Bahadur, son of the deceased, reigned from 1066 Bengal era (A.D. 1659) to 1104 B.E. (A.D. 1697), and died of fever. His body was buried in the Great Flower Garden. He reigned thirty-eight years, four months, and thirteen days.

3d. Diwan Asd Ulla Khan, son of Diwan Kwajah, reigned from 1104 Bengal era (A.D. 1697) to 1125 B.E. (A.D. 1718). His reign was twenty-one years, one month, and twenty days. He named his sons Azim Khan and Badyal Zaman Khan his heirs, and died.

4th. Diwan Badya Al Zaman Khan reigned from 1125 Bengal era (A.D. 1718) to 1158 B.E. (A.D. 1751). The days of his reign were thirty-three years. He named his four sons, Ahmad al Zaman Khan, Mahamad Ali Naki Khan, Asd al Zaman Khan, and Bahadur Al Zaman Khan, his heirs; and with the consent of the other three, raised his third son, Asd Al Zaman Khan, to

the throne, on the 1st Bysach 1159 B.E. He died in 1178 B.E. His body was buried in the Flower Garden.

Ahmad Al Zuman Khan, eldest son, died before his father's eyes in Rajnagar on the 15th Magh 1169 Bengal era (A.D. 1762). His body was buried in the Great Imam Barah.

Mahamad Ali Naki Khan Bahadur died 21st Phalgan 1171 (A.D. 1764) Bengal era, at Rajnagar. His body was buried side by side with his elder brother in the Great Imam Barah.

5th. Rajah Mahamad Asd al Zaman Khan Bahadur reigned from the 1st Bysach 1159 Bengal era (A.D. 1752) to 1184 B.E. (A.D. 1777). In 1184, having gone to the city of Calcutta, inhabited by many noble men, he fell sick of callej, and died. His body was carried home and buried in the Flower Garden. The days of his reign were twenty-six years. [Callej is a sort of paralysis, caused, according to native ideas, by a bird casting his shadow on a person.]

6th. Mahamad Bahadur al Zaman Khan reigned, after the death of his brother, from the beginning of 1185 Bengal era (A.D. 1778) to 1196 B.E. (A.D. 1789). The days of his reign were twelve years. During his lifetime, in the year 1193 B.E., he made his little son sign and seal all papers of state, and taught his son all the duties and customs of a prince. In 1196, being sick of dropsy in the testicles, in his country house at Haseinabad, he died. His body was borne to the royal city, and laid in the Flower Garden.

7th. Rajah Mahamad al Zaman Khan Bahadur, on the death of his father, being a minor, succeeded. He performed the offices of royalty, and sealed and signed the state papers. By reason of his being a minor, Mr. Keating was Sarbarakar, and Lal Ram Nath was Diwan. In 1197 Bengal era (A.D. 1790) he came of age, and obtained a sanad from the Government for the kingdom of Beerbhoom. The days of his reign were twelve years. Being sick (of Sanjar-Pota), he died on 5th Phalgun 1208 B.E. (A.D. 1801), in the Palace with the Twelve Gates. His body was buried in the Great Flower Garden.

8th. Rajah Mahamad Daura al Zaman Khan reigned in the room of his father from 1209 Bengal era (A.D. 1802). He obtained a sanad of the kingdom from Government in 1219 B.E. (A.D. 1812). Being afflicted with Sanjar, he died in the royal city on 17th Phalgun 1262 (1855). He named his son Mahamad Johar al

Zaman Khan and Ram Bakshan his wife and heirs. His body is buried in front of the mosque in the Market Place of the royal city.

This family book of the house of Nagar was copied on the 28th Magh 1271 Bengal era (A.D. 1864), on Thursday (Panch Shambah), and finished at 9 A.M. in Soory, according to order, by Sheikh Rahm Baksh, Mooktear (my Munshi).

[I have found it impossible to adhere to a uniform system of spelling, as many places have now acquired an official orthography which it would be mere pedantry not to recognise; thus, Bishenpore for Vishnupur, etc.]

APPENDIX G.

SANTAL TRADITIONS, LITERALLY TRANSLATED.

I.—Formation of the Earth.

Of old, all this was a sea; there were two birds—a drake and a duck. They were brooding above (the water). Then Mārāng Buru (supposed to be the same as Siva of the Hindus) said, 'Where shall I place these birds?' He said, 'In the midst of the sea there is a lotus.' Then he said, 'Who will raise up this earth? There is a crab; go ye and call him.' They having called the crab, he came, and standing by Mārāng Buru, inquired, 'Why have you called me?' 'For this only: could you raise up this earth?' 'O yes; if you command me, I could raise it.' Then the crab, taking earth in his claws, and raising it up, the earth all washed away. Then Mārāng Buru said, 'This fellow can never raise this earth. Who (else) is there out there?' 'There is no one but an earth-worm-king.' 'Go ye, then, and call him.' They having called the earth-worm-king, he said, 'Wherefore, O Great Lord, (and) Mārāng Buru, have ye called me?' 'Oh, nothing; only, could you raise up this earth here?' 'Yes, though I could not raise it alone.' Then the Great Lord inquired of him, 'Who is there out there?' 'No one; only a tortoise. If he would take me on his head, I could raise up the earth.' 'Then call the tortoise.'

The tortoise coming, said, 'O Great Lord, and Mārāng Buru, wherefore have ye called me?' 'Nothing; only, could you take this earth on your head here?' 'Yes, receiving your commands, I could raise it; but you must chain my four feet to the four corners (of the earth): then I shall be able to raise it.' Then they having chained him (the tortoise), the earth-worm-king raised up the earth on the leaf of the lotus.

Then said the Great Lord to Mārāng Buru, 'Go ye, see, and bring us word.' Then Mārāng Buru, descending, came and saw,

and tried it with the pressure of his foot, but found it unsteady (floating). Then Mārāng Buru, returning to the Great Lord, said, 'The thing is this: it is unsteady (floating).' Then the Great Lord said to him, 'Then go thou and sow the seeds of grass, and let the roots take fast hold.'

II.—THE FIRST HUMAN PAIR.

Then was produced the *bena* (a kind of coarse grass). On that *bena* the drake and duck, descending, laid their eggs. Having incubated, they hatched out two persons (a brother and sister).

After this the Great Lord inquired of Mārāng Buru, 'How is it?' Then he replied to him, 'Only two persons are born.' 'Well, if they have been born, let them remain there.' (Again) the Great Lord said to Mārāng Buru, 'Go, look at them, and bring me word.' Then Mārāng Buru, going, saw them, and brought word: 'O Great Lord, I went and saw them. They have grown up, but are destitute of clothing.'

III.—GARMENTS SUPPLIED.

Then the Great Lord said, 'O Mārāng Buru, take them two cloths—one of ten cubits, and one of twelve cubits.' Having taken them the cloths, they inquired, 'O grandfather, whither have you come?' 'Hither, O grandson, have I come to visit you.' 'We are well.' 'Then, O grandson, put on this cloth.' Then he gave the boy the ten-cubit cloth, and the girl the twelve-cubit cloth. Then the boy's cloth served only for a *ropani* (the cloth that is attached before and behind to a string passing around the loins). The twelve-cubit cloth barely covered the girl's loins.

IV.—THE PREPARATION OF INTOXICATING LIQUOR.

Moreover, the Great Lord said to him, 'O Mārāng Buru, go and see those two persons.' Then Mārāng Buru, having been and seen them, said to them, 'O grandchildren, I have a matter to tell you two. Will ye hear me?' 'Yes, O grandfather; speak, we will listen.' 'It is this: I give to you two yeast. Take it, and put it into a *hānda*' (earthen pot). 'Yes, we

will do that.' Then they prepared the *hānda;* and after four days he came (again) to see them. 'O grandchildren, have you prepared the *hānda*, as I told you at that time?' 'Yes, O grandfather, we have put the *hānda* in order.' 'Then show me what you have done.' Then, having seen, he said to them, 'O grandchildren, fill ye up with water' (the *hānda*). They having filled up the *hānda* with water, Mārāng Buru inquired of them, 'O grandchildren, have you supplied the water? Then make cups of leaves, O grandchildren: have you made the cups?' 'Yes, O grandfather, we have made the cups.' 'Then bring them.' They (brought them, and) said, 'Take, O grandfather, and drink.' 'No, O grandson, there is one thing to be done.' They then inquired, 'What is it?' 'First, you must worship (with a libation) this Mārāng Buru' (*i.e.* me, the Mārāng Buru).

V.—THE PROPAGATION OF CHILDREN.

Then they two, having worshipped Mārāng Buru, he said, 'Now, drink ye.' They said, 'O grandfather, take thou and drink.' 'No, grandchildren, take ye and drink.' Again said Mārāng Buru, 'Drink ye; I will return home.' Then they two drank, and became drunk. After that, Mārāng Buru returning, saw them that they were greatly intoxicated. This one was lying in one place, and that one in another place. Mārāng Buru seeing them thus lying drunk, drew them together. Then they two lay together as man and wife.

The next day Mārāng Buru, visiting them early in the morning, saw them lying together, and said, 'Ho, then, O grandchildren, are you not up yet?' 'Ah, grandfather, this is very bad. You made us very drunk yesterday. Oh, shame, grandfather; but so it is. Now, what can be done?'

Then, remaining there, seven sons and seven daughters were born to them two. After a time they were driven away by the Marja Tudukko.

VI.—THE DISPERSION.

'Under the thorn bush they hid me,
Under the tall grass they concealed me.'

Then, being unable to remain longer there, they took them (their children) to the foot of Chāe Champā, and there they

remained. Dwelling there, they greatly multiplied. There were (two gates), the Ahin gate and the Bāhini gate, to the fort of Chāe Champā.

Then Pilchu-hānām and Pīlchu-brudhi (the original pair) divided them (their posterity) into different castes. The first-born became Nījhāsdā-had; after him was Nij Murmu-had; after him was Nij Saren-had; after him was Nijtāti-jhāri-hās-dā-had; after him was Nījmarndi-had; after him was Nijkesku-had; and after him was Nijtudu-had.

Then they went out from the foot of Chāe Champā, and, departing, they were spread abroad and scattered in Dugdarāhed. From these, some went to the country of Sīng; others went to Sīkar; others to Tundi; and others went to Kātarā. Then others went and departed thence, and were scattered everywhere. From that time to the present, men have gone on multiplying in the world.

[These legends were collected among the southern Santals, and forwarded to me by the Baptist missionary, Mr. Phillips. They are substantially the same as the traditions of the central Santals, but the spelling of proper names is slightly different.]

APPENDIX H.

A SKELETON SANTALI GRAMMAR,

Based on the Rev. J. Phillips' 'Introduction to the Santal Language,' with additions from other Missionaries, and from my own researches.

I. Pronunciation.

Santali exhibits a peculiar sharp stop occurring sometimes in the middle, but more frequently at the end, of certain words, and caused by the dropping of a letter. Thus *da*, 'water,' with an abrupt jerk between it and the next word, from the original root *dag*, 'water,' as shown in *dag-ai*, 'it will rain.' It is impossible to describe this sound accurately, but its effect is generally to produce an aspirate breathing, and it is represented by Santal students sometimes by !, and sometimes by the Sanskrit visarga (:), to which it bears a phonetic resemblance.

II. Alphabet.

The Bengali alphabet precisely fits Santali, except that the compound vowel *ṛi* in Santali has only the simple *ri* sound, as indeed it has practically in low Bengali. The same may be said of *li*.

The vowel *a* is inherent to the Santali consonants, except in the case of final consonants, and in a few words even to the latter class: thus *hără*, not *hăr*, 'a tortoise;' *băkă*, not *bak*, 'the heart.'

III. Pronominals.

(*a.*) Inflectional pronominals. These are added on to the root, and are of two kinds: (1) Those that form true compounds with roots, as the inflections of duality and plurality: thus *kul*, 'a tiger;' dual, *kulkin;* plural, *kulko. Kulkin* and *kulko* become in turn the base to which the case-endings are stuck on. (2) The

case-endings, which, as will be seen from the paradigm of the noun, are very numerous, and which are in fact merely postpositions, not incorporated with the root, and but slightly cohering to it.

(*b.*) The Personal Pronouns:

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Ing, *I* (contracted for *aing*).	Alang, *we two, i.e. you* and *I.* Aling, *we two, i.e. he* and *I.*	Abe, Aban, } *we.*
2d.	Am, *thou.*	Aben, *you two.*	Ape, *ye.*
3d.	Huni, *he, she.* Onā, *it.*	Hunkin, Onākin, } *they two.*	Hunko, Onko, } *they.*

The possessives are formed either by prefixing *t* to the simple pronouns, or by adding the regular genitive case-endings to a compound form of the personal pronouns; thus:

	Singular.	*Dual.*
1st.	Ting, *or* ai-rini, *my.*	Taling, *or* aĭ-ren-kin, *of us two.*
2d.	Tam, akin-rini, *thy.*	Taben, akin-ren-kin, *of you two.*
3d.	Taĭ, ake-rini, *his.*	Takin, ake-ren-kin, *of them two.*

Plural.

1st. Tale, taben, *or* aĭ-ren-ko, *our.*
2d. Tape, akin-renko, *your.*
3d. Tako, ako-ren-ko, *their.*

(*c.*) Demonstratives:

Huni, uni, hani, hana, hona, una, *that.*
Nui, nua, nia, *this*, etc.

(*d.*) Pronominals of quantity:

Mih, *one.*	Tinā, *some.*
Mi-mi, *each.*	Nŭnā, *so much.*
Eta, *other.*	Nāse-nāse, *some, a little.*
Ar, ar-ho, *more, moreover.*	Adhan, *half, a few.*
Chet, *what?*	Amanā, *wide, many, much.*
Chet-hong, *anything.*	Joto, *all.*
Chet-leko, *how?*	Tin-tinā, *how much?*

The Numerals:

1, Mĭh.	20, Mĭh-īsī.	100, Mih-sāē.
2, Bārēā.	40, Bār-isi.	200, Bar-sae.
3, Pēā.	60, Pe-isi.	300, Pe-sae.
4, Ponēā.	80, Pon-isi.	400, Pon-sae.
5, Mănē.	100, Mănē-isi.	500, Manē-sae.
6, Tŭrŭī.	120, Turui-isi.	600, Turuĭ-sae.
7, Eāe.	140, Eāe-isi.	700, Eāe-sae.
8, Irāl.	160, Irāl-isi.	800, Irāl-sae.
9, Arē.	180, Arē-isi.	900, Arē-sae.
10, Gel.	200, Gel-isi.	1000, Gēl-sae.

It will be noticed that up to 200 the notation is by scores; the numbers between 10 and 20 are formed by affixing the simple number to 10; thus: gel-mih, 11; gel-pea, 13, etc.

(*e.*) Pronominals of Time:

Nĭt, *now.*	Mĭh-ronga, *one month.*
Teheng, *to-day.*	Mĭh-serma, *one year.*
Hăla, *yesterday.*	Nes, *this year.*
Māhānder, *day before yesterday.*	Kālom, *next year.*
Onmāhānder, *three days ago.*	Sātom, *two years hence.*
Gāpā, *to-morrow.*	Pher-Sātom, *three years hence.*
Meang, *day after to-morrow.*	Din-Kālom, *last year.*
Enderaĭ, *three days hence.*	Hăl-Kālom, *last year but one.*
Anga, *dawn.* Setāh, *morning.*	Māhāng-Kālom, *three years ago.*
Baskereḍa, 9 *a.m.*	Tis, *when?*
Tikin, *noon.*	Enāng, *then* (past).
Tarasing, 3 *p.m.*	Dhināng, *then* (future).
Ayūp, *evening.*	Māṇāng, *before.*

(*f.*) Pronominals of Place:

Năntē, *here* (proximate).	Bedhāĭ, *all round.*
Antē, *there* (intermediate).	No-pārom, *this side.*
Hānte, hānāre, *there* (remote).	An-pārom, *that side.*
Jāhāngrē, *where.*	Okākhon, *whence.*
Sāmāng, *in front of.*	Uḍūngre, *outside.*

etc. etc. etc.

For fuller lists, see the Rev. Mr. Phillips' Introduction, p. 54 et seq. (Calcutta, 1854.)

IV. ROOTS.

(*a.*) Nouns have one declension, three numbers—singular, dual, and plural—with eight cases in each. Thus:

Kŭl, *a tiger.*

Singular:

Nom. Kŭl.	*Acc.* Kul, *same as nominative.*
Gen. Kul-rĭnĭh, renko, rēā, rēnkin.	*Abl.* Kul-khon, khonāh, thenkhon.
Inst. Kul-ĭātē, hătētē.	*Loc.* Kul-re, tālāre.
Dat. Kul-ṭhen, ṭheh, sūrăte, phed.	*Voc.* Eho-kul.

Dual, Kulkin; Plural, Kulko—

forming inflections by means of the same postpositions as the singular. Besides the postpositions given above, there are many others. Santali makes hardly any use of prepositions, but tacks the particles on to the end of the word which they govern. Santali is devoid of abstract nouns, but supplies the want by a free use of the neuter form of the verb; thus, instead of saying, 'The English statutes are just,' a Santal would say, 'The English have-ordained (neuter form) is just.'

(*b.*) Verbs.

Mr. Phillips states that the Santal verb has four voices (active, middle, passive, and neuter); five moods (indicative, subjunctive, potential, imperative, and infinitive); nine tenses (the future, present, present definite, imperfect, imperfect definite, perfect, perfect definite, pluperfect, pluperfect definite; of which the following paradigms illustrate five).

The Santal verb has three numbers—singular, dual, and plural. It has also two genders—common (*i.e.* masculine or feminine) and neuter. It has the peculiarity of agreeing in number, gender, and person, not only with the noun that governs it, but with the noun it governs; part of the verb agreeing with the former, part with the latter, in the nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative cases. [Mr. Puxley's unpublished researches are my principal authority for this part of the grammar.]

The verb 'to be' is irregular in Santali, as in most other languages; that is to say, several verbs are employed, none of which has survived in a perfect and complete form. *Menā* is used in the present tense, thus:

INDICATIVE.

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Mēn āĭng-jna, *I am.*	Mēn-ālĭng-ye.	Mēn-āle-ā.
2d.	Mēn-āmā, *thou art.*	Mēn-ābēn-a.	Mēn-āpē-ā.
3d.	{ Mēn-aĭā, *he or she is.* { Men-āh-ā, *it is.*	Men-akin-a.	{ Mēn-āko-a. { Mēn-āh-ā.

SUBJUNCTIVE.

1st.	Mēn-āĭng-khān, *If I am.*	Mēn-ālĭng-khān.	Mēn-ālē-khān.
2d.	Mēn-ām-khān, *If thou art.*	Mēn-ābēn-khān.	Mēn-āpē-khān.
3d.	Mēn-āĭ-khān, *If he is.*	Mēn-ākĭn-khān.	Mēn-ākō-khān.

POSSESSIVE FORM.

Agreeing in number and person with the nominative and genitive.

1st.	Mēn-āh-ting-jna, *It is mine.*	*Singular.*
2d.	Men-aing-tama, *I am yours.*	
3d.	Men-akin-taya, *Those two are his.*	
1st.	Men-ai-taling-ya, *It belongs to us two.*	*Dual.*
2d.	Men-ah-taben-a, *It belongs to you two.*	
3d.	Men-ale-takin-a, *It belongs to them two.*	
1st.	Men-ako-tale-a, *Those are ours.*	*Plural.*
2d.	Men-aling-tape-ya, *We two are yours.*	
3d.	Men-aben-tako-a, *You two are theirs.*	

The other tenses of the substantive verb are supplied by *tahen, remain;* thus:

Intransitive verb, Tahen, *remain.*

INDICATIVE MOOD.

FUTURE TENSE, *I shall remain.*

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Tāhēn-āïng.	Tāhēn-āling.	Tāhēn-ālē.
2d.	Tahen-am.	Tahen-aben.	Tahen-ape.
3d.	Tahen-ai.	Tahen-akin.	Tahen-ako.

PRESENT, *I remain.*

1st.	Tāhēn-kān-ai.	Tahen-kan-aling.	Tahen-kan-ale.
2d.	Tahen-kan-am.	Tahen-kan-aben.	Tahen-kan-ape.
3d.	Tahen-kan-ai.	Tahen-kan-akin.	Tahen-kan-ako.

IMPERFECT, *I remained.*

1st.	Tahen-ēn-aing.	Tahen-en-aling.	Tahen-en-ale.
2d.	Tahen-en-am.	Tahen-en-aben.	Tahen-en-ape.
3d.	Tahen-en-ai.	Tahen-en-akin.	Tahen-en-ako.

The numbers and persons of the other tenses are formed with equal regularity, so that it is only necessary to give the first person singular, dual, and plural of each; thus:

PERFECT, *I have remained.*

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Tahen-akan-aing.	Tahen-akan-aling.	Tahen-akan-ale.

PLUPERFECT, *I had remained.*

1st.	Tahen-len-aing.	Tahen-len-aling.	Tahen-len-ale.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

FUTURE TENSE, *I may remain.*

1st.	Tahen-cho-ing.	Tahen-cho-ling.	Tahen-cho-le.
2d.	Tahen-chom.	Tahen-cho-ben.	Tahen-cho-pe.
3d.	Tahen-cho-e.	Tahen-cho-kin.	Tahen-cho-ko.

PRESENT, *If I remain.*

1st.	Tahen-khan-eng.	Tahen-khan-ăling.	Tahen-khan-āle.

IMPERFECT, *Should I remain.*

1st.	Tahen-en-khan-eng.	Tahen-en-khan-āling.	Tahen-en-khan-āle.

PERFECT. *I may have remained.*

1st.	Tahen-ākān-khan-eng.	Tahen-ākān-khan-āling.	Tahen-ākān-khan-āle.

PLUPERFECT, *I might have remained.*

1st.	Tahen-len-khan-eng.	Tahen-len-khan-ăling.	Tahen-len-khan-āle.

POTENTIAL MOOD.

I could have remained.

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st	Tahen-koh-aing.	Tahen-koh-āling.	Tahen-koh-āle.
2d.	Tahen-koh-am.	Tahen-koh-āben.	Tahen-koh-āpe.
3d.	Tahen-koh-āi.	Tahen-koh-ākin.	Tahen-koh-āko.

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Tahen-mā-ing.	Tahen-mā-ling.	Tahen-mā-le.
2d.	Tahen-me, *or* me-a.	Tahen-ben, *or* bena.	Tahen-pe, *or* pea.
3d.	Tahen-mā-i.	Tahen-ma-kin.	Tahen-ma-ko.

INFINITIVE MOOD.

Tahen-ăte, *to remain.*

PARTICIPLES

Present, Tahen-kă-te, *remaining.*
Past, Tahen-en-khan, *having remained.*

GERUNDS.

Tahen-en-te, }
Tahen-akan-te, } *By remaining,* or *having remained.*
Tahen-len-te, }

One other paradigm must suffice. In the intransitive verb *tahen*, we have exhibited the agreement of the Santal verb with its nominative in number and person; the transitive verb *dāl*, strike, presents the agreement in number and person with the accusative it governs. It will be observed that the root of the verb comes first, then the accusative, then the nominative. As the nominative is regular throughout, and undergoes no phonetic change, it will save space to give it separately, and afterwards only with the first tense of the indicative and subjunctive moods, the latter of which uses a contracted form.

Nominative case, for verbs, in the Indicative Mood:

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Aing, *I.*	Āling, *we two.*	Āle, *or* Abăn, *we.*
2d.	Ām, *thou.*	Āben, *you two.*	Āpe, *you.*
3d.	Āi, *he.*	Ākin, *they two.*	Āko, *they.*

NOMINATIVE CASE, SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD:

1st.	Eng.	Leng.	Le *or* Băn.
2d.	Em.	Ben.	Pe.
3d.	E.	Kin.	Ko.

TRANSITIVE VERB, Dāl, *strike*—INDICATIVE MOOD.

FUTURE TENSE.

Singular.

1st. Dāl-eng-jnā-āi, *He will strike me.*[1]
2d. Dal-me-āing, *I will strike thee.*
3d. Dal-e-ām, *Thou wilt strike him.*

[1] Observe that the person and number of the verb are regulated not by the nominative governing it, but by the accusative governed by it.

Dual.

1st. Dāl-ălingă-ākĭn, *They two will strike us two.*
2d. Dal-ăbenā-ālĭng, *We two will strike you two.*
3d. Dal-ăkĭnā-āben, *You two will strike them two.*

Plural.

1st. Dal-ăleā-āko, *They will strike us.*
2d. Dal-ăpeā-āle, *We will strike you.*
3d. Dal-ăkoā-āpe, *You will strike them.*

In the subsequent tenses of the indicative, I omit the nominative pronoun.

PRESENT DEFINITE.

	Singular.	*Dual.*
1st.	Dāl-eng-kānā, *is striking me.*	Dal-eh-ling-kana, *us two.*
2d.	Dal-eh-me-kana, *is striking thee.*	Dal-eh-ben-kana, *you two.*
3d.	Dal-e-kana, *is striking him.*	Dal-eh-kin-kana, *they two.*

Plural.

1st. Dal-eh-le-kana, *is striking us.*
2d. Dal-eh-pe-kana, *is striking you.*
3d. Dal-eh-ko-kana, *is striking them.*
3d person, neuter, Dā-dal-kana, *is striking it or them.*

PRESENT INDEFINITE.

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Dal-ed-ing-jna, *strikes me.*	Dal-eh-lĭngyā.	Dal-eh-leā, *us.*
2d.	Dal-eh-mea, *strikes thee.*	Dal-eh-benā.	Dal-eh-peā, *you.*
3d.	Dal-ed-ea, *strikes it.*	Dal-eh-kĭnā.	Dal-eh-koā, *them.*

3d person, neuter, Dal-e-da, *strikes it or them.*

In the same way are formed the numbers and persons of the remaining tenses of the indicative. I therefore give only the first person of each :

IMPERFECT.

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Dal-ked-ing-jnā. *Struck me.*	Dal-ket-lingyā. *Struck us two.*	Dal-ket-leā. *Struck us.*

PERFECT.

1st.	Dal-ākād-ing-jnā. *Has struck me.*	Dal-ākāt-lingyā. *Has struck us two.*	Dal-ākāt-leā. *Has struck us.*

PLUPERFECT.

1st.	Dal-led-ing-jnā. *Had struck me.*	Dal-let-lingyā. *Had struck us two.*	Dal-let-leā. *Had struck us.*

The three compound past tenses are regularly formed from the simple tense, with the auxiliary *tahen*, to be. Thus:

Imperfect definite.—Dal-eh-me-tāheng-kān-āi, *He was striking thee.*
Perfect definite.—Dal-ākāt-me-tāheng-kān-āko, *They have been striking thee.*
Pluperfect definite.—Dal-let-me-taheng-kān-āĭng, *I had been striking thee.*

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

FUTURE TENSE, with the nominatives affixed.

Singular.

1st. Dāl-eng-cho-e, *He may strike me.*
2d. Dal-me-cho-eng, *I may strike thee.*
3d. Dal-e-cho-em, *You may strike him.*

Dual.

1st. Dal-ăling-cho-kĭn, *They two may strike us two.*
2d. Dal-ăben-cho-leng, *We two may strike you two.*
3d. Dal-ăkĭn-cho-ben, *You two may strike them two.*

Plural.

1st. Dal-ăle-cho-ko, *They may strike us.*
2d. Dal-ăpe-cho-le, *We may strike you.*
3d. Dal-ăko-cho-pe, *You may strike them.*

3d person neuter—Dal-cho-e, *He may strike it*, or *them.*

PRESENT, *if* (*he*, etc.) *struck*, without the nominative expressed.

	Singular.	*Dual*	*Plural.*
1st.	Dal-eng-khān.	Dal-ălĭng-khān.	Dal-ăpe-khān.
2d.	Dal-me-khān.	Dal-ăben-khān.	Dal-ăle-khān.
3d.	Dal-e-khān.	Dal-ăkĭn-khān.	Dal-ăko-khān.

IMPERFECT, *if* (*he*, etc.) *struck*, nominative not expressed.

1st.	Dal-ked-ing-khān.	Dal-ket-ling-khān.	Dal-ket-le-khān.

PERFECT, nominative not expressed.

1st.	Dal-ākăd-ing-khān.	Dal-ākăt-ling-khān.	Dal ākăt-le-khān.

PLUPERFECT, nominative not expressed.

1st.	Dal-ling-khan.	Dal-le-ling-khan.	Dal-le-le-khan.

POTENTIAL MOOD.

Nominative not expressed.

	Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
1st.	Dal-king-jnā.	Dal-ke-lingyā.	Dal-ke-leā.
2d.	Dal-ke-mā.	Dal-ke-benā.	Dal-ke-peā.
3d.	Dal-ke-ā.	Dal-ke-kĭnā.	Dal-ke-koā.

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

Singular.	*Dual.*	*Plural.*
Dal-eng-me. *Strike me.*	Dal-ko-ben. *You two strike them.*	Dal pe. *Do ye strike it.*

INFINITIVE MOOD.

Dā-dāl-āte, *to strike it.* Dāl-ko-te, *to strike them.*

PARTICIPLES.

Dāl-kā-te, *striking.*
Dal-ket-khān, *having struck.*

GERUNDS.

Dal-ket-te, }
Dal-ākāt-te, } *By striking*, etc.
Dal-let-te, }

The reflective verb (or middle voice) is formed by conjugating the active verb with the inflections of the intransitive verb, as exhibited in *tahen*, p. 458. In the future and present tenses, *oh* is inserted between the root and the inflection; thus:

Future, Dal-oh-aing, *I shall strike myself.*
Pres. def., Dal-oh-kan-āing, *I am striking myself.*
Imperfect, Dal-en-aing, *I struck myself.*
Perfect, Dal-akan-aing, *I have struck myself.*

The rest of the middle voice is formed, like the imperfect and perfect tenses, by the addition of the inflections of the intransitive verb.

The causal verb is obtained by inserting *ocho* or *ho-cho* immediately after the root, and using the inflections of the transitive verb, as shown in *dal* (p. 460); thus:

Future, Dal-ocho-me-aing, *I shall cause thee to be beaten.*
Present, Dal-ocho-eh-me-kan-aing, *I cause thee to be beaten.*
Imperfect, Dal-ocho-ket-me-aing, *I caused thee to be beaten.*
Perfect, Dal-ocho-akat-me-aing, *I have caused you to be beaten.*

And so on throughout the other moods and tenses.

The foregoing will suffice to show the general character of Santali, and to fix its place among languages. Mr. Phillips' Introduction exhibits, in Bengali characters, its forms at greater length; and I hope that the Rev. Mr. Puxley may be induced at no distant date to publish the more complete and scientific grammar for which he has been collecting materials during many years. To both of those gentlemen I beg once more to acknowledge my obligations.

APPENDIX I.

TEN SANTAL FESTIVALS.

1. *Johorai*—after gathering in the December rice-harvest; lasts five days in each village, but is generally protracted to a month, by fixing different days for it in neighbouring villages. The ceremony is simple. An egg is placed on the ground; all the cows of the village are driven near to it, and the animal that first smells at the egg is honoured by having its horns rubbed with oil.

2. *Sakrat*—a few days after the Johorai; lasts two days. It consists of practising with bows and arrows, performing the sword dance, and similar sports.

3. *Játrá*—about February; lasts two days Eight men sit on chairs; are swung round the two posts placed outside of every Santal village. The same sort of revolving swing as is set up for the children in English fairs.

4. *Báhá* ('flower')—about March; lasts two days. Every house washes the Nāikki's (priest's) feet, and he distributes flowers in return. Ceremonies take place in the grove of trees outside each village. Four chickens are offered to Mārāng Buru (the great god of the Santals); one coloured chicken to Jahir-erá (the primeval mother of the race); one black chicken to Gosain-erá (a female divinity residing, like Jahir-erá, in the Sal grove); and a goat or chicken to the Mānjhi Hārām (the late head of the village).

5. *Pótá* (hook-swinging); now stopped by Government, but still practised (1865) among the northern Santals in April or May. Lasted about one month. Young men used to swing with hooks through their back, as in the Charak Pujá of the Hindus. The swingers used to fast the day preceding and the day following the operation, and to sleep the intermediate night on thorns.

6. *Ero-sím* (sowing chicken); offered in each house at seed-sowing time.

7. *Hariar-sím* (green chicken); offered by the Naikki (priest) when the *dhan* has somewhat grown.

8. *Chhátá* ('umbrella')—about August; lasts five days. The Náikki (priest) offers a goat, and the people all dance round a bamboo umbrella erected on a high pole.

9. *Iri-gundli* (two kinds of grain). The Náikki (priest) offers these with milk in the Jahir-than (Sal grove), and calls upon the poor to come and eat.

10. *Horo* (rice)—when the rice is ripening. The first-fruits of the rice are offered to the Pargana Bongá (the district deities), along with a pig, which the men of the village afterwards eat in the Sal grove.

In all these festivals there is a great quantity of rice-beer drunk.

APPENDIX K.

A FEW OFFICIAL PAPERS ON THE SANTAL INSURRECTION.

No. I.—*General Instructions to the Civil Officers. Despatch No.* 1786, *from the Government of Bengal, dated* 30*th July* 1855.

Sir,—You will have been made aware, before this communication reaches you, that Major-General Lloyd has been appointed to take command of the whole of the troops operating against the Santals.

2d. General Lloyd has been directed by the Supreme Government to proceed in the first instance to Rajmehal. He has been informed that the President in Council, considering it very desirable that prompt and speedy measures should be taken to put down the insurrection, has resolved upon placing the conduct of the operations entirely in his hand; and he has been requested to take immediate steps for dispersing and capturing the insurgents, and for putting down the rebellion.

3d. In communicating these orders to this Government, the President in Council has requested that the Lieutenant-Governor would instruct the civil officers of the several divisions to communicate with the Major-General, and to afford him every information and assistance in carrying into effect the line of operations he may decide upon.

4th. In a subsequent communication, the President in Council has explained that it was not intended by the above-quoted instructions to General Lloyd, that the military should act independently of the civil power against our own subjects, but simply that the nature of the military operations necessary for dispersing and capturing the insurgents, and for putting down the rebellion, should be entirely in the hands of the military commanders. It is stated also that the civil authorities have still power to act with the civil means at their disposal, and that the only change intended to be made is in transferring the power each civil officer

had over the movements of the troops to a military officer of experience, who, as far as the military are concerned, is charged with the operations necessary for quelling the insurrection. The President in Council considers, it is added, that the civil authorities should abstain from ordering out troops except in cases of sudden emergency, but that they should keep the military officers, particularly the officer in command in the district, fully informed on all points connected with the state of the country and the movements of the rebels, and offer such suggestions as may occur to them connected with the general objects in view.

5th. Since General Lloyd's appointment it has also seemed desirable to the President in Council to appoint Colonel Bird, with the position of a brigadier, to the special command of the troops employed in Beerbhoom and Bancoorah districts. This officer is instructed to take immediate measures, in concert with the civil officers, for dispersing and capturing the insurgents wherever they may be, and for putting down the rebellion. He is informed that Mr. Loch at Munglepore, and yourself at Sooree, will afford him every information and assistance; and he is requested to act in concert with Mr. Loch and yourself in carrying out the line of operations necessary to suppress the insurrection.

6th. The Lieutenant-Governor has only to add to the above instructions the expression of earnest hope that you yourself, and all the civil officers subordinate to you, will in every possible way aid and promote the operations of the troops. Your attention should more particularly be directed to procuring efficient and trustworthy guides for the troops, and to providing them with carriage and supplies. Orders have some days since been issued to the magistrates of all the surrounding districts, urging them to procure as many elephants as possible, and forward them into Beerbhoom and Bhaugulpore; and (a number) have already been sent up direct from Calcutta. Also, as soon as it shall be directed at what places detachments of troops are to be posted, you should see that every exertion is made to afford good shelter both for officers and men; and special care should be taken to provide, as early as possible, charpoys, or some elevated platforms for the Sepoys to lie upon. (This paragraph is carelessly copied. W. W. H.)

7th. You should likewise—if, as may be possible, the medical arrangements are not yet efficiently organized—take it upon your-

self to see that the officer in command of every detached body of troops is furnished with a few simple medicines, particularly quinine, with brief instructions as to the quantities to be given.

8th. The Lieutenant-Governor is desirous to receive reports from you of the progress of affairs as frequently as possible.

9th. You will communicate the above orders to the several officers subordinate to you who are employed in the disturbed districts.

No. II.—*Instructions from the Commissioner to Magistrates to offer Pardon, dated 15th August* 1855.

SIR,— . . . .

2d. You will be good enough to promulgate amongst the Santal population, by every means in your power, copies of the enclosed proclamation; and the name of every one appearing before you to make submission should be entered in a book exhibiting the following particulars. (A schedule enclosed.)

3d. To all who tender their submission a certificate in the accompanying form should be given, and the accompanying Moochoolika (*i.e.* bond) should be signed by them.

No. III.—*The Proclamation of Pardon.*

Inasmuch as it appears that amongst the Santals, who have risen in rebellion against the Government, plundering and devastating the country and opposing the troops, there are many who see the folly and iniquity of their proceedings, and are desirous of being pardoned and resuming their former quiet life, notice is hereby given, that the Government, ever anxious for the welfare of its subjects though led away by counsels of bad men, will freely pardon all Santals who may within ten days appear before any constituted authority and tender their submission, always excepting those who shall be proved to have been principal instigators and leaders of the insurrection, and those who shall be proved to have been principally concerned in the perpetration of any murder. As soon as complete submission is shown, all well-grounded complaints preferred by the Santals will be fully inquired into. But, on the other hand, all insurgents remaining in opposition to Government after the issue of this proclamation, will be visited with the promptest and severest punishment.

No. IV.—*Letter from the Magistrate of Beerbhoom to the Commissioner of Burdwan Division, dated 24th September* 1855.

During the past fortnight, upwards of thirty villages have been plundered and burned by the insurgents in Thannas Operbundah and Nangoolea. The whole of the country, from Lorojore, four miles west of Nuggur, to within a short distance of Deoghur, is in their hands. The Dawks (mails) are stopped, and the inhabitants have deserted their villages, and fled. They are divided into two large bodies: one encamped at Raksadangal, ten miles north of the Operbandah Thannah in Zillah Bhaugalpore; and the other at Teelaboonie, six miles west of Soory, and also in Bhaugalpore, but on the confines of Tannah Nangoolea; and their numbers average, as nearly as we can ascertain, from 12,000 to 14,000, and are receiving augmentations from all quarters.

2d. A party of about 3000 of the Raksadangal Santals, led by Mocheea Kosnjola, Rama and Soondra Manjhees, encamped near Operbandah on the afternoon of the 16th inst., and on the following day plundered and burnt the Thannah and village. The Darogah and Burkundazes remained at their post till the last moment; but seeing the overwhelming numbers of their assailants, and that resistance on their part must be useless, they retreated, and the Darogah contrived to escape with great difficulty *via* Shahna and Afzulpore, and arrived here on the 22d with only the clothes on his back. He had heard some days before that the Santals intended attacking the Thannah, and had sent all the records, etc., to Deoghur for security, and also applied to the officer commanding the detachment there for assistance; but the latter, owing to the distance and dense jungle *en route*, declined to send troops to his aid. On informing Mr. Ward of the circumstances, he told me that detachments of troops were to be sent forthwith from Raneegunge to Jumterra in Thannah Shahna, to Operbandah, and to Afzulpore, to be stationed there until the military force can take the field against the Santals after the rains are over; and I have just heard that the detachment has arrived at the former place, which will suffice for the protection of Thannah Shahna, in the jurisdiction of which no plunder has yet been committed; but the Santals are now assembling with the intention of joining the rebels. Until troops are stationed at Operbandha, everything must remain in the pre-

sent state of anarchy and confusion; but directly they arrive, I shall send the police back to the Thannah, and set the Dawk (mail) going again. At present it is impossible, as Rama Manjhee, with 200 men, has taken up his position in the jungle near Haldigurh Hill, and waylays and plunders everything that attempts to pass that way. The absence of a civil officer at Deoghur is greatly to be regretted at the present juncture, when his services would be of so much value; but I have already brought this to your notice in a former letter.

3d. The gang of from 5000 to 7000 Santals, under Seeroo Manjhee, who had taken Sooleah Takoor at Teelabooney, have strengthened their position by earthworks, and dug tanks there. They have also made preparations for celebrating the Doorgah Pooja, for which purpose they have carried off and detained two Brahmins from one of the villages plundered by them in Thannah Nangoolea; and spies who came in yesterday say that they are only waiting for the Raksadangal gang to join them, before advancing to attack Soory; but I think it improbable that they will venture to attack the station under present circumstances. They sent us in what is called in their language a 'dāhrā,' or 'missive'—viz. a twig of the Sal tree with three leaves on it, each leaf signifying a day that is to elapse before their arrival—a few days ago, which was brought by one of the Deoghur Dāk runners, whom they seized and sent back for the purpose. The colonel commanding has taken the precaution of stationing piquets at different points on the north and west side of the station, which would be most exposed in the event of an attack; and I understand that Seyt Gillan and his Burkundazes, whom I placed at the disposal of the special Commissioner when here, at the latter's request, is to be sent to Nuggur, where the residents are in a state of great alarm, and many have deserted their houses.

NO. V.—*From the Civil Officer to the Collector of Beerbhoom, Raneegunge, the 13th November 1855.*

SIR,—Martial law having been proclaimed in the disturbed districts, my functions have ceased. Should you wish to communicate with me on any subject connected with this insurrection, which might require to be settled as having originated in this office, I shall feel obliged by your doing so as soon as possible, directing to me at Hooghly.

APPENDIX L.

REVENUE OF THE UNITED DISTRICT, AND COST OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION, BEFORE THE PERMANENT SETTLEMENT.

Revenue, 1789.

	Current Rupees.
Land Revenue of Beerbhoom, ...	611,321
Land Revenue of Bishenpore, ...	386,707
Miscellaneous Revenue, ...	15,000
Total Current Rs.,	1,013,028

Or, £101,302, 16s.

Expenditure, 1789.

	Sicca Rupees.
General Charges for collecting and remitting the Revenue,	33,020
Collector's Private Commission, ...	10,900
Civil Justice, ...	6,772
Criminal Justice, including Rs. 400 for killing tigers; Rs. 400 for prisoners' diet; and Rs. 36 for charity, .	3,000
Total Sicca Rs.,	52,692

About £5400 stg.

1789.

Receipts, ...	£101,302	16	0
Cost of Administration, ...	5,400	0	0
Net profit to Government, .	£95,902	16	0

APPENDIX M.

THE PRESENT REVENUE OF THE DISTRICT, AND COST OF ITS ADMINISTRATION.[1]

RECEIPTS.

1864–65.

	Rupees.
Land revenue,	7,44,965
Fines,	4,500
Fees,	600
Excise,	45,929
Sale proceeds of opium,	7,018
Income tax,	32,412
Sale of stamps,	71,685
Receipt stamps,	406
Penalties for infringement of stamp laws,	3,300
Collections of resumed police lands,	2,500
Total,	9,13,315
Education department,	3,100
Post-office department,	7,200
Grand total,	9,23,615
or £92,361 10 0	
Deduct expenditure,	2,48,691
or £24,869 2 0	
Net profit,	6,74,924
or £67,492 8 0	

CHARGES.

1864–65.

	Rupees.
Value of stamps refunded,	2,000
Income tax refunded,	500
Charges for remitting treasure, including boxes covered with canvas, packing, etc.,	1,500
Charges for destruction of wild animals,	100
Travelling allowance of officers, etc.,	500
Collectorate charges,	35,508
Excise do.,	2,776
Income tax do.,	2,706
Charges for Stamp department,	2,600
Charges of Judges' Court,	71,000
Charges of Magistrates' Court,	30,200
Jail charges,	7,000
Salary of the civil surgeon,	4,200
Dispensary allowance of do.,	120
Pensions,	5,634
Political pensions,	347
Police department,	62,000
Education department,	10,000
Post-office department,	10,000
Total,	2,48,691
or £24,869 2 0	

[1] This exhibits the estimated revenue and government expenditure in Beerbhoom alone, Bishenpore being now included in another district.

APPENDIX N.

A TABLE SHOWING THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF THE FOLLOWING SPECIES OF RUPEES CURRENT IN BENGAL, BAHAR, AND ORISSA, COMPARED WITH THE SICCA RUPEE, FROM ASSAYES BY THE CALCUTTA MINT IN OCTOBER 1792.

Species of Rupee.		Intrinsic Value, compared with the Sicca Rupees.		
		Rs.	A.	P.
1. Siccas of Moorshedabad, per Sicca weight,	100	100	0	0
2. Siccas of Patna,		100	0	0
3. Siccas of Dacca,		100	0	0
4. Pholy Sonats,		100	0	0
5. Delhi Mahomet Shai,		99	8	0
6. Money Surat, large,		99	8	0
7. Benares Sicca,		99	8	0
8. Bissun Arcot,		97	14	6
9. Sonats Sabic,		97	8	0
10. Sonats Duckie,		97	8	0
11. Forshee Arcots,		97	6	6
12. French Arcots,		97	0	0
13. Patanea Arcots,		96	9	6
14. Aurungzebe Arcots,		96	9	6
15. Gursaul,		96	9	6
16. Madras Arcots, new,		96	4	9
17. Muslipatam Arcots,		96	0	0
18. Shardar Arcots,		96	0	0
19. Patna Sonatts, old,		96	0	0
20. Benares Rupees, old,		95	14	6
21. Madras Arcots, old,		95	14	6
22. Furruckabad Rupees,		95	12	9
23 Jehanjee Arcots,		95	11	3
24. Chunta Arcots,		95	11	3
25. Calcutta Arcots,		95	6	6
26. Moorshedabad Arcots,		95	6	6
27. Old Arcots,		95	3	3
28. Dutch Arcots,		95	0	0
29. Surat Arcots,		94	0	0
30. Benares Frisolie,		92	6	6
31. Viziery Rupees,		63	0	0
32. Narrany half rupee,		63	0	0

APPENDIX O.

LIST OF COINS AND WEIGHTS CURRENT IN SIX INDIAN PORTS IN 1763.

[For Bengal Coins, see Appendix N.]

MADRAS.

Gold and Silver Weights.

	oz.	dw.	gr. Troy.
1 Pagoda is	0	2	$4\frac{75}{100}$
$9\frac{1}{18}$ do. is	1	0	0
8 do., 1 dollar weight, ...	0	17	14
100 dollars, ...	88	1	17
100 Venetian ducats, ...	11	0	5
100 gubbers, at a medium, ...	10	17	12
1 rupee, ...	0	7	11
100 do., ...	37	5	20

1 Madras pagoda weighs 2 dw. $4\frac{3}{4}$ gr.; or, English standard, 20 car. $\frac{24}{5}$ gr., country touch, $8\frac{5}{8}$; China, $86\frac{1}{4}$.

1 Allumgeet pagoda, 1 dw. 22 gr.; or, English standard, 23 car. $2\frac{4}{5}$ gr.; country touch, $9\frac{7}{8}$; China, $98\frac{1}{4}$.

80 cash make 1 fanam.

36 fanams, 1 pagoda-poise. 2 dw. 4 gr. is 8625 matts fine.

100 Madras rupees weight, 37 oz. 5 dw. 20 gr., and are better than standard, $14\frac{1}{2}$ dw.

100 Bombay do. are better than standard, $10\frac{1}{2}$ dw.

SURAT.

Gold and Silver Weights.

	oz.	dw.	gr. Troy.
1 Chowle is 1 rutta.			
3 rutta make 1 voll, ...	0	0	$5\frac{28}{32}$
32 voll make 1 tola, ...	0	7	$18\frac{1}{11}$
$82\frac{1}{2}$ do. make 2 tolas and $18\frac{1}{2}$ volls, or . .	1	0	0

	oz.	dw.	gr. Troy.
9¼ voll = 1 Venetian weight, . . .	0	2	$5\frac{5}{14}$
100 do. = 28 tola 29 voll, ...	11	14	22
73 voll = 1 dollar weight, ...	0	17	18
100 do. weight, 228 tola 4 voll, . . .	88	15	0
31 tola = very near	12	0	0
The seer for coral = 18 great pice, or 27 common pice weight, ...	12	5	20
Do. for musk, ...	11	0	0
The Surat seer = 30 pice, and weighs at a medium,	13	12	0

	Rupees.	Annas.	Pice.
1 Spanish dollar full weight, 73 volls, . .	2	3	0
100 do. do., . . .	219	12	9
100 ounces Mexico dollars are . . .	247	0	0
4 pice make	1 anna.		
16 annas, or 64 pice, make	1 rupee silver.		
13½ silver rupees are equal to . . .	1 rupee gold.		

BOMBAY.

Coins.

	Rupees.	Annas.	Pice.
1 Venetian = ...	3	14	0
1 gubber = ...	3	12	6
1 gold moor or rupee, ...	13	8	0
100 rees make	1 quarter.		
400 do. make	1 rupee.		

GOA.

Coins.

80 Leader rees are . . . . 1 silver tango.
5 tangos, ... 1 pardao or xeraphin.

MALACCA.

Gold Weights.

	oz.	dw.	gr.
16 Miams make 1 boucall, equal to troy weight, .	1	9	15[illegible]
20 boucalls make 1 catty, ...	29	16	0

Coins.

4 Doits = ... 1 stiver.
6 stivers, ... 1 skilling.

8 skillings,	1 rix dollar.	
1 duccatoon is current for	13 skillings.	
1 English crown piece,	10 do.	
1 Bombay or Surat rupee,	5 do.	
1 Madras rupee (though of the value with Bombay),	4 do.	Because they are not so broad as the Bombay or Surat rupee.
1 Arcot rupee (though but 1 per cent. worse than Surat),	4 do.	

CALLICUTT AND TELLICHERRY.

Coins.

16 Tarr or viss make	1 fanam, called gallee.
5 fanams make	1 rupee.

1 Spanish dollar full weight is accounted 2¼ rupees, but pass in the bazaar only from 10 fanams, 4 tarr to 10½ fanams.

PRINTED BY MORRISON AND GIBB LIMITED, EDINBURGH

WORKS BY SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.,

M.A. (Oxford), LL.D. (Cambridge).

IN PREPARATION.

A HISTORY OF BRITISH INDIA.

In Five Volumes.

Based on the Manuscript Records and the District Inquiries conducted for the Statistical Survey of India.

Vol. I. in 1898.

From the discovery of the Cape Route in 1498 to the final Founding of Calcutta in 1690.

THE ANNALS OF RURAL BENGAL.

Sixth Edition. 16s.

From the Manuscript Records.

'It is hard to overestimate the importance of a work whose author succeeds in fascinating us with a subject so generally regarded as unattractive, and who, on questions of grave importance to the future destiny of India, gives the results of wide research and exceptional opportunities of personal study, in a bright, lucid, forcible narrative, rising on occasion to eloquence.'—*Times.*

'Mr. Hunter, in a word, has applied the philosophic method of writing history to a new field. . . . The grace, and ease, and steady flow of the writing almost makes us forget, when reading, the surpassing severity and value of the author's labours.'—*Fortnightly Review.*

ORISSA:

THE VICISSITUDES OF AN INDIAN PROVINCE UNDER NATIVE AND BRITISH RULE.

Two Vols., Map and Steel Engravings. 32s.

From the Manuscript Records.

'The mature and laborious work of a man who has devoted the whole power of his mind, first to the practical duties of his profession as an Indian civilian, and next to the study of all that relates to or can illustrate it. As long as Indian civilians write books like this—as long as they interest themselves so passionately in their work, and feel so keenly its connection with nearly every subject which can occupy serious thought—the English rule will not only last, but will prosper, and make its subjects prosper too.'—*Pall Mall Gazette* (1872).

'A great subject worthily handled. He writes with great knowledge, great sympathy with the Indian people, a keen and quick appreciation of all that is striking and romantic in their history and character, and with a flowing and picturesque style, which carries the reader lightly over ground which, in less skilful hands, might seem tedious beyond endurance.'—*Saturday Review.*

Works by Sir William Wilson Hunter—*continued.*

BENGAL MS. RECORDS.

Four Vols. 30s.

A Selected List of 14,136 Letters in the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, 1782–1807.

WITH A

HISTORICAL DISSERTATION ON LAND RIGHTS IN BENGAL.

'This is one of the small class of original works that compel a reconsideration of views which have been long accepted and which have passed into the current history of the period to which they refer. . . . If these four volumes stood alone they would place their author in the first rank of scientific historians; that is, of the extremely limited class of historians who write from original MSS. and records. But they do not stand alone. They are the natural continuation of the author's researches, nearly a generation ago, among the District Archives of Bengal, which produced his "Annals of Rural Bengal" in 1868 and his "Orissa" in 1872. They are also the firstfruits of that comprehensive history of India on which he has been engaged for the last twenty years, for which he has collected in each province of India an accumulation of tested local materials such as has never before been brought together in the hands, and by the labours, of any worker in the same stupendous field, and which, when completed, will be the fitting crown of his lifelong services to India. These volumes are indeed an important instalment towards the projected *magnum opus*, and in this connection it is of good augury to observe that they maintain their author's reputation for that fulness and minuteness of knowledge, that grasp of principles and philosophic insight, and that fertility and charm of literary expression, which give Sir William Hunter his unique place among the writers of his day on India.'—*Times.*

THE INDIAN EMPIRE:

ITS HISTORY, PEOPLE, AND PRODUCTS.

Third Edition. 800 pp., with Map. Seventh Thousand. 18s.

'Never before has the whole subject of Indian history been so adequately and so intelligibly treated.'—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

'A compact body of information, arranged and classified on correct principles.'—*Academy.*

'A model of combined lucidity, conciseness, and comprehensiveness.'—*Economist.*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INDIAN PEOPLES.

Twenty-first Edition. Eighty-second Thousand. 3s. 6d.

'Within the compass of some 250 pages we know of no history of the people of India so concise, so interesting, and so useful for educational purposes as this.'—*London School Board Chronicle.*

'By far the best manual of Indian history that has hitherto been published.'—*Times of India.*

'The publication of the Hon. Sir W. W. Hunter's school history of India is an event in literary history.'—*Reis & Rayyet.*

THE INDIAN MUSSULMANS.

Third Edition. 10s. 6d.

'A masterly essay.'—*Daily News.*

A STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF BENGAL AND ASSAM.

With Maps. In Twenty-two Vols., half morocco, 5s. each.

'Un ensemble d'efforts digne d'une grande nation, et comme aucune autre n'en a fait jusqu'ici de semblable pour son empire colonial.'—*Revue Critique.*

'Twenty volumes of material, collected under the most favourable auspices, are built up under his hands into a vast but accessible storehouse of invaluable facts. Invaluable to the statesman, the administrator, and the historian, they are no less interesting to the general reader. Sir W. W. Hunter undoubtedly has the faculty of making the dry bones of statistics live. But they also contain matter which may be regarded as the fountain of the yet unwritten history of Bengal. They are a guide for administrative action now. They also seem to be the point of a new departure for the future.'—*Nineteenth Century.*

THE IMPERIAL GAZETTEER OF INDIA.

Second Edition. Fourteen Vols., half morocco, £3, 5s.

'The publication of "The Imperial Gazetteer of India" marks the completion of the largest national enterprise in statistics which has ever been undertaken. . . . The volumes before us form a complete account of the country, its geography, topography, ethnology, commerce, and products. . . . It is one of the grandest works of administrative statistics which have ever been issued by any nation.'—*Times.* (*Two notices.*)

'Sir W. W. Hunter has rendered to the Indian Government and to English people generally the highest service a public servant could achieve.'—*Athenæum.*

A LIFE OF THE MARQUESS OF DALHOUSIE.

Seventh Thousand. 2s. 6d.

'It can be read at a sitting, yet its references—expressed or implied—suggest the study and observation of half a lifetime.'—*Daily News.*

'A brilliantly-written account of the life and work of that able ruler of men, the Marquis of Dalhousie.'—*Asiatic Quarterly Review.*

'Never have we been so much impressed by the great literary abilities of Sir William Hunter as we have been by the perusal of "The Marquess of Dalhousie."'—*Evening News.*

A LIFE OF THE EARL OF MAYO.

FOURTH VICEROY OF INDIA.

Second Edition. Two Vols. 24s.

'The picture presented to us of the late Lord Mayo is a fair and noble one, and worthy of the much lamented original.'—*Edinburgh Review.*

'This masterly work has two great recommendations: it is the vividly and faithfully told narrative of the life of a man; and it contains a lucid and comprehensive history of recent administration in India.'—*World.*

A SHORTER LIFE OF LORD MAYO.

Fourth Thousand. One Vol., 2s. 6d.

'A brief but admirable biography.'—*Times.*

'The world is indebted to the author for a fit and attractive record of what was eminently a noble life.'—*Academy.*

A LIFE OF BRIAN HOUGHTON HODGSON,

BRITISH RESIDENT AT THE COURT OF NEPAL.

14s.

'In this life of a great Indian civilian and scholar, Sir William Wilson Hunter has produced a work which might serve as a model for biographies of the kind.'—*Times.*

'A revelation of a remarkable and most interesting personality. A charming book.'—*Scotsman.*

'Gracefully and tenderly written. . . . The story of Brian Hodgson is not only of interest to the man of affairs, the scholar, and the student of science, but it is a tale which appeals to all who can notice and appreciate genuine human qualities.'—*Athenæum.*

BOMBAY, 1885 TO 1890.

A STUDY IN INDIAN ADMINISTRATION.

One Volume. Clarendon Press. 15s.

'Few living writers have done so much as Sir William Hunter to make British India and its government intelligible to English readers.'—*Times.*

FAMINE ASPECTS OF BENGAL DISTRICTS.

Second Edition. 7s. 6d.

'One of the boldest efforts yet made by statistical science. . . . In this work he has laid down the basis of a system, by which he may fairly claim that scarcity in Bengal has been reduced to an affair of calm administrative calculation.'—*Daily News.*

THE OLD MISSIONARY.

Twenty-first Thousand. EDITION DE LUXE, Illustrated. 2s. 6d.

'A tale of tender pathos which it is difficult to read without tears.'—*Spectator.*

'A descriptive study analogous to some of M. Paul Bourget's "Pastels." Perhaps the best of these, "Un Saint," will be recalled to the memory of its readers by Sir William Hunter's "Old Missionary".'—*Times.*

'It brings back the flavour of old days, old scenes, old memories, the full pulsing life of the District. . . . He has the rare faculty of seeing things in place of shadows—his characters are living men.'—*Academy.*

'Nothing of the kind was ever written more telling.'—*Illustrated London News.*

JUST OUT.

THE THACKERAYS IN INDIA.

Sixth Thousand. 2s. 6d.

'Sir William Hunter's new book is a remarkable example of how dry official manuscript records can be made to yield up the romance of history, or, more strictly speaking, to furnish a series of brilliant narratives from contemporary documents. The result is a book that reads like a novel. The ease and simple polish of Sir William Hunter's style conceals all traces of the severe labour bestowed.'—*Times.*

'A book so crowded with the action and enterprise, and the sentiment and romance; of a century of lives and deaths, that one rises from the reading of it almost crushed by the mass of its emotion.'—*Spectator.*